



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

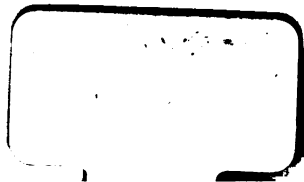
### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

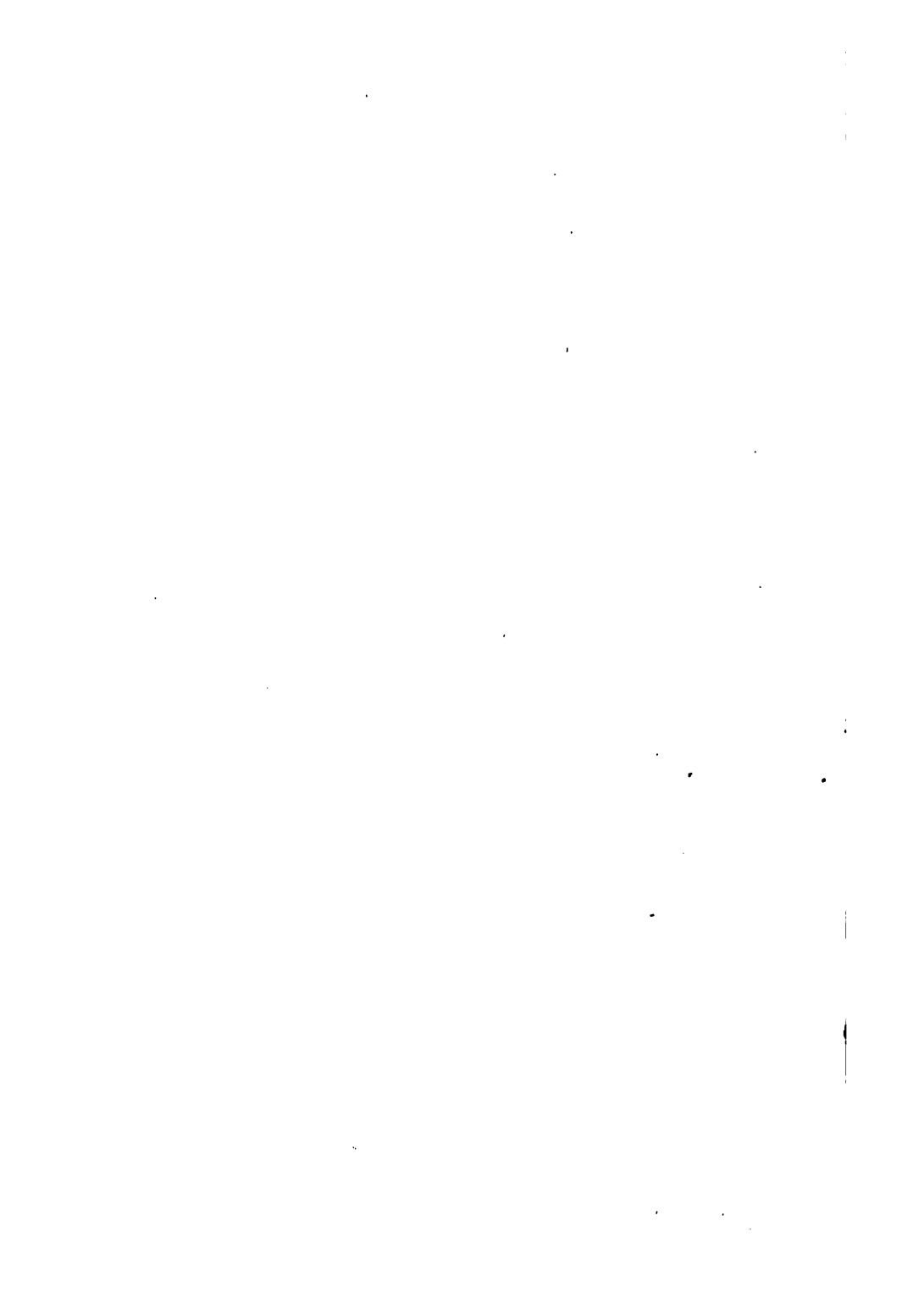




600058415T







# HOW I ROSE IN THE WORLD

A NOVEL



IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

LONDON:

CHARLES J. SKEET, 10, KING WILLIAM STREET

CHANCERY CROSS

DUBLIN: McGLASHAN AND GILL

1868.

*The right of translation is reserved.*

250. v. 14.



# HOW I ROSE IN THE WORLD.

---

## CHAPTER I.

CONTAINS A LITTLE OF MY EARLY LIFE.

I AM a small boy, trotting, on a dark night, through narrow lanes and gloomy thoroughfares; thick, drizzling rain is coming down, and I am crying. A man is before me right a-head, and I strain every nerve in my little body in the bootless effort to overtake him. I shout to him at intervals—scream, roar, bellow—all in vain. I cough occasionally, for the unnatural exertion of a naturally weak voice causes my throat to tickle, and renders this proceeding an important and imperative one. I am breathless and in agony. Drops of moisture stand upon my brow, and trickle down my nose; they mingle with my tears, and find a common resting-place in my mouth. I



gasp, and almost choke. My throat swells, even to suffocation, and I tug at my shirt collar in the desperation of despair. Ah! joy unutterable! the button-hole bursts, the band gives way, and I feel the keen, cold air upon my neck and bosom. I am relieved, and press on, but the man is still before me. As he passes along he flings up his arms into the damp and misty night, at one moment shouting with all his might, as if to test the strength and quality of his lungs, and the next pausing to look in at some imposing "gin palace," whose dancing lights, splendid fittings, and costly array of glass and pewter present such powerful attractions to our hardy sons, and, alas! too often *daughters* of toil.

Into one of those "whited sepulchres" a woman also looks with gleaming, hungry eyes. A young, shrunken, faded woman, with "want" as plainly written upon her wan face as if stamped there with a red-hot iron. Wretched—incomparably wretched—is this poor outcast in the abjectness of her unmitigated poverty—wretched, incomparably wretched, in her hollow, sunken eye and wasted

form—wretched, oh! *how* incomparably wretched in the little bleached skeleton she holds tightly to her breast, and which seeks to draw sustenance from that fount now for ever dry. This apparition speaks to the man; lays a fleshless hand timidly upon his arm; but with a strange oath he shakes her off, and mother and child roll together in the mud. On he passes, and his enthusiasm increases at every step. A ragged urchin, with an attenuated candle suspended by the wick, ventures, as he emerges from a chandler's shop, to congratulate him upon the execution of a favourite ballad; but he kicks the youth who told the "flattering tale," and still goes on. On, through courts, lanes, and alleys, narrow, dark, and dirty, where "Prince Pestilence" and "King Death" hold such joyous revel—on, through noble streets and broad thoroughfares, his song becoming louder, and his enthusiasm wilder, proportionate to the encouragement he receives.

Is he drunk or mad, this racing, roaring gentleman?

For the moment he is both.

Heedless of the angry wayfarers, elbowed rudely from his path, he crosses Westminster Bridge, and, reaching the corner of "Stangate," suddenly stops. With a bound *I* am by his side, clutching nervously at a lamp-post for support, and endeavouring to gaze up into his face, now scarce discernible by the feeble light which struggles down upon us from its height above.

The man is tall and powerful-looking, with a huge moustache and a splendid dark eye. They scowl at me (the moustache and the eye), but I do not fear them. A hand is raised against me, yet I do not shrink ; a voice speaks to me, and I answer. This is what it says—

"Boy, begone!"

I will *not* begone! You have struck my mother, and I have followed you to say that the day will come when you shall repent it."

"Ha! ha! ha! How like his father—George Allen, as I knew him when a boy. But what shall I repent?"

"That blow! Had George Allen lived he would have torn you to pieces. *I* cannot do that *yet* ;

but George Allen lives in George Allen's son, and as surely as there's a God in heaven I will repay you."

"How old are you?"

"Fourteen. I am small, I know, for my age, but my frame is strong. Feel it; it is *iron*."

"Come this way. So! now you are in a long narrow passage; it is dark, and no human being near. What should prevent my dashing your brains out against that dripping wall?"

"Nothing, perhaps."

"Are you afraid?"

"Afraid! No."

"Why? Is not my arm strong?"

"Yes, but *God's* is stronger still! *It* holds you back; you cannot harm me."

"You are right. Now listen to me. Eighteen years ago I met your mother for the first time at a garrison ball, given by a few officers to the fashionables of Brighton and its immediate neighbourhood. I had not been half an hour in her society when I loved, or, what is pretty much the same, *fancied* I loved her. I determined she should be my wife,

and as I was then young, rich, and tolerably handsome, and she the portionless daughter of a retired subaltern, I felt no doubt of my success. In due time I knelt at her feet, and asked her to share with me my name and fortune, and, without a moment's reflection, she *refused*. Two years from this she married your father, a young surgeon of good family, and lived with him in Paradise, whilst I was with the *damned*. Mad-dened by disappointment, I plunged headlong into the vortex of a dissipation that, at the time, I loathed. I drank, gamed, cheated, quarrelled, fought, seduced—all but *murdered*. Your father was an old schoolfellow of my own. I had long known him to labour under heart disease, and some devil whispered in my ear that he would not live long. I listened to this whispering devil, and believed him. Now, mark his end. He was connected with one of the principal hospitals in London, and his practice was both varied and extensive. One day he was called upon to remove the leg of a poor labourer, who had fallen from a height, and lay in a very critical and dangerous

state, at a farmhouse some five or six miles south of Charing Cross. The operation was performed carefully and skilfully, and the local surgeon had just taken him by the hand, for the purpose of offering some professional compliment, when he staggered back, and sank heavily into a seat. They bore him to the light and air, but all was over. One flash of triumph from his large, dark eye; one smile upon his pallid lip—a hurried breath—a gurgling groan—a gush of bright red blood; and so, with the amputated limb of a saved man in his grasp, he passed into eternity."

"Why do you tell me this?"

"You shall know. But listen still. The shock to your mother was, as you can well imagine, a terrible one; her reason gave way, and, for a time, she was the inmate of a mad-house. When that reason returned, and renewed health had brought back the light to her eye and the colour to her cheek, she seemed to me lovelier than ever, and again I presented myself—again to be refused. Yes, boy, she was true to her first love—true as I was false. Well, I did not tire,

for I knew that poverty, like a blight, would one day come upon her, and that then my hour of triumph would be near. It was so. Your father dead, numerous friends dropped off, and poor Mrs. Allen was passed by, if not forgotten, at least unrecognised. Debts accumulated, creditors became clamorous, positive want stared her in the face, and she was at length driven from her home into the streets, a houseless wanderer. The end was now at hand. On a bitter January morning she stood weary, footsore, and humbled before me, without one human being in this Christian England to succour, assist, comfort, or console her. "Save us, and—" She could go no further. Grace and yourself cried with pain, and hunger, and exposure to cold; and, as she sank upon her knees, and in an agony flung her child into my arms, I felt that the *mother* had at length triumphed, and that she was now indeed my own."

"But that blow?"

"God! 'twas a cruel one, and I could almost wish that the hand that dealt it were now hacked

off at the wrist. But go home, boy, and bide your time, and the day *will* come for your revenge."

Night passed, and the cold, grey dawn of a December morning broke slowly enough through the window of my sleeping apartment. With a cry, I started up, rubbed my eyes, tumbled out of bed, hurried on one or two necessary articles of clothing, and then proceeded to make a hasty toilet, consisting, as it chiefly did, in dabbing the wet corner of a towel into each eye, running one hand through my hair, giving the waistband of my trousers an encouraging hitch, and then quietly slipping on my vest and jacket. Having got through this ordeal very satisfactorily—and I appeal to my boy readers of fourteen if it be *not* an ordeal—I sat down to recall the occurrences of the past day. To do this, I found it necessary to re-enact the scene of the preceding night, in which, as it appeared to me, I had played a rather prominent part; and, after half-an-hour's private communion with myself, I rose from



my chair, and sought my mother's room, bearing with me the full conviction that I was a remarkably brave little fellow, and that the dark man, my step-father, was a most thorough-paced rascal.

How he and I came to be at loggerheads on that eventful night shall now be shown.

My father, as the attentive reader is already aware, was a young surgeon, struggling for a position, who married my mother, the daughter of a defunct, and—for some cause that I am unable to explain—*pensionless* infantry lieutenant, through downright honest love, and nothing else. He cared little about money, and less about pedigree; and poor, plain little Mary Tate, in a two-storeyed, ivy-porched, latticed-windowed cottage, would have been pretty much the same to him as the *Honourable* Mary Tate, with a mansion in "Belgravia," and a castle or two in Yorkshire. The title, or the *sound* of it, might one day fall coldly on his ears, and the mansion and castles no longer find favour in his sight; but the simple, trusting, faithful woman's heart would

ever be a "priceless jewel." What wealth, thought Dr. Allen, can purchase *that*?

Of the union referred to I was the first fruit, and I had played my little part upon the stage of life nearly six years when my father abruptly quitted it. Every circumstance connected with his death I remember as distinctly as if they were but the occurrences of yesterday, and I sometimes feel a melancholy pleasure in dwelling upon them.

About nine o'clock on the morning of the eighteenth March, 1826, he left his home light-hearted and happy, and was brought back three or four hours later, by pallid, awe-stricken men, a cold, breathless corpse.

They lay that corse upon a bed, and an anguish-torn woman bends over it. In a corner, and busily occupied in knocking the nose off a china dog, stands a little boy. That little boy is myself. I am not *so* busy or pre-occupied but that I can see what passes—the darkened room—the coffin—the sheets—the pitying looks—and, above all, the pale, cold face of the early dead. I see, too, men and women hurrying hither and

thither, and hear noise and confusion of all sorts, and a little crying, and a good deal of swearing, and some suppressed laughter; and, in the midst of all, a strange feeling of loneliness creeps over me, and I shudder, I scarce know why. In that corner I stand unthought of and neglected,—nobody has spoken to me, nobody has looked at me, not even my mother. Heart and mind, and soul, and thought, are with the dead, and I am quite forgotten. But for *that day only*, for the following one I am taken in a coach a long way into the country, and, in a quiet churchyard, I stand beside a new-made grave; and there they lay all that is mortal of George Allen.

*Then* came our troubles. *Then* did the shadow of death really rest upon our house.

Three months passed and I was alone, unless, indeed, a gloomy old domestic with a decidedly puritanical cast of countenance could be called a companion. Where was my mother? In a *mad-house*! So said this hard-fisted, hard-featured, and I might, alas! add, *hard-hearted* specimen of

humanity ; and to do her nothing but simple justice, I am bound to say that on this occasion, at least, she spoke the truth. I may remark, in passing, that her name was Jenkins, and if she be still in the flesh I should wish to see her—that's all ! I never liked this woman, and it is now highly improbable that I ever shall. The glance of her cold grey eye brought terror to my childish heart ; and as for her *voice*—why it was anything the reader chooses to imagine it—*except* “low music.” She was fully sixty, and tall, thin, and straight, like an old regulation-ramrod. She was known to be married, and to be living in constant apprehension of a visit from Mr. J. himself, who, some eight or ten years previous to the opening of this story, had been obligingly accommodated with a free passage to some far-off land by the Government of the day, England having been considered too narrow a field for the proper cultivation of his peculiar talents. He was said to have been possessed of a most inquiring mind, and to have frequently laboured in the pursuit of knowledge under difficulties of no ordinary character, and it

was, therefore, thought prudent to transfer his services to some distant settlement, where they would be indubitably appreciated and rewarded. The warrior (he had been in the army) sometimes corresponded with the wife of his bosom, using a sheet of foolscap for the purpose, the postage of which *she* had always to pay; and on one occasion, greatly to her alarm, hinted the probability of his returning at no very distant day, to become again the partner of her home and affections.

For a long time I entertained as strong doubts of this lady's honesty as the world in general seemed to have done that of her husband's; and in the face of much difficulty and discouragement I determined to keep my eye upon her. This, however, was all I could do. For had she taken my little body, as she did my little body's best habiliments, and transferred it with them to the keeping of one of those worthies who have been called (though why I know not) "Uncles" to the whole human race, such was my dread of her that I dared not have resisted. I saw, day by

day, and with increasing apprehension of an attack upon myself, the wardrobe of my father, the best dresses of my mother, and my own Sunday jackets and trousers handed over to the keeping of one of those relatives, and I feared that his close connection with the family would be considered a sufficient excuse for his not being asked to return them.

It was an amusing sight to see us two living together in that great old house, with nothing to break in upon the desolation of the scene save the diurnal visits of the milkman (who was a boy of my own age, by the way), and those of a grave, middle-aged gentleman, named Martin, a dustman by profession, brother to Mrs. J., and as rigid and morose as herself. This individual might have been seen occasionally of a Sunday evening perched upon a stool in the neighbourhood of Highbury, warning sinners of their evil ways. For this performance he received eighteen-pence per night, but not considering the pay sufficiently remunerative, especially during the winter months, he contrived to drop the curtain at nine o'clock, or, at all

events, as near to it as circumstances would permit, and seek our home, where a comfortable little supper, and something hot after it, invariably awaited him, "just to keep the cold out of his stomach, poor man."

Mr. Martin never regarded me with any peculiar favour or affection, that I could see. He always made faces at me when he called, shook his head, and said that I was on the "broad road," and likely, he feared, to continue there for the remainder of my days. He also used to call me a variety of awful names, the very sound of which made my rather closely-cropped hair stand on end, and usually wound up with some allusion to the "Valley of Jehoshaphat," which I did not then understand, nor, indeed, do I now. Spiritual affairs, however, did not appear to have engrossed all his time and attention. Matters of a strictly secular nature sometimes obtruded themselves, and the *Christian* was occasionally absorbed in the *man*. So absorbed, indeed, that Mr. Martin, dustman and "sinner warner" as he was, became a most important and effective auxiliary in carry-

ing out his sister's designs ; and it is marvellous how many articles disappeared from the culinary department under *his* immediate superintendence, which would otherwise have successfully baffled the skill and defied the strength of the good lady herself. It was, I say, an amusing sight. The work of plunder "going bravely on," with as much indifference to *my* presence as if I were one of the coal scuttles which the dustman, with unexampled gravity, from time to time consigned to his cart.

And so the months went by, and the long summer days departed, and winter began to throw its dark shadow across our gloomy hearth. Crouched over the decaying embers of a particularly small fire, learning my lesson (for I went to school), or listening to the sermonings of my friend the dustman, the time passed, but still my mother came not. I counted the weeks, the days, the hours, sadly, slowly, drearily.

One bleak, cold night, towards the end of March, a strange knock was heard at the door, and Mrs. J., with surprise and alarm struggling for the



mastery in her face, rose to open it. I hugged myself inwardly, for I knew the knock was not the knock of the dustman. In a moment she returned, followed by an elderly gentleman, whom I remembered to have seen at our house once or twice, and who was, I had been told, a distant connection of my mother's. He brought me news of her. "She was now quite well," he said, "and would soon be home again. How should I like that?"

"Of course I should like it of all things."

"And a little sister into the bargain?" questioned Mr. Spalding.

"And a little sister into the bargain," I replied.

"Is this woman kind to you?"

I had the fear of Mrs. Jenkins before my eyes, and answered "Yes." Cunning little dog! I had already seen enough of the world to know that "though all things were *lawful*, still, that all things might not at all times be quite *expedient*." Therefore I answered "Yes."

"He may well say that," interposed the house-keeper. "He's the sickliest, downiest little fellow

I ever saw in my life; and I declare I'm worn to a skeleton attending upon him."

Mr. Spalding, if I might judge by his looks, seemed to consider *my* personal character involved in this statement, and turned to me wonderingly for an explanation.

Alas! what could I do? Under the influence of Mrs. J.'s keen grey eye I had taken the first false step, and nothing now remained but to go on. I proceeded, therefore, to give the gentleman a very graphic, if not very truthful, account of the various maladies with which I was afflicted, and succeeded in bringing tears of sympathy for my sufferings into his good old eyes. The attacks, I assured him, were most frequent at midnight, "when tired nature had usually sunk to repose," (I pirated this last from Green's Third Reading-Book for Boys, and slyly passed it off as my own), and so malignant were they in character, that I was frequently, indeed I might say *constantly*, compelled to summon Mrs. Jenkins to my bedside, whose gentle, patient, self-denying exertions in my behalf I found it difficult sufficiently to extol. As

I was at it, I threw in a word about the dustman gratis, whom I represented as bearing me upon his herculean shoulders to my couch, when rendered helpless by pain, or overpowered by sleep.

Mr. Spalding was greatly pleased at all this, and, having told me a good deal about my mother, rose to depart. He said that he purposed leaving England immediately, but that when he had made his fortune I should see him again. He was a man of but few words, so he patted me kindly on the head several times, as I sat on a stool by the kitchen fire, hoped I'd be a good boy, and love my mother, (he needn't have hoped *that*,) put a sixpence into my hand,—which Mrs. Jenkins took from me soon afterwards,—coughed, blew his nose, and departed.

Dear reader, have *you* lost a father at a tender age? seen your mother torn from you a raving maniac, yourself shut up in a gloomy house, your companion a selfish, dishonest old woman? No kiss, no smile, no gratifying a childish wish, no yielding to a childish caprice; nothing but

●

dreariness and desolation before and behind, on the right hand and on the left? If this has been your position in early life, you can understand *my* feelings at the simple words, "Your mother is your own again."

Mr. Spalding had been gone rather better than a month when my mother returned. She arrived, as well as I can remember, at five o'clock in the day. Mrs. Jenkins left home some three hours previously; and, little to my surprise, has not since been heard of. The dustman appears to have followed her fortunes, as the stool at Highbury is now occupied by another; and they both are probably engaged at this very moment in plundering some wretched little boy in the absence of his mother.

---

## CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH I TELL SOMETHING OF MRS. BRIDGET  
O'LEARY, AND AN EXTRAORDINARY INSURANCE  
CASE.

I KNOW not how it was, but my father's friends seemed to have deserted us by mutual consent. With the exception of a second cousin of my mother's, nobody ever visited us. Why she thought proper to do so, I was at a loss to conceive, for she seemed as poor as Job, and not half so patient.

This lady, Mrs. Bridget O'Leary, was the widow of an Irish major, of an Irish regiment, who could boast, like "Rob Roy," of being descended from "a long and noble line of martial ancestry," and who had all, or nearly all, fulfilled the prediction of Him who "spake as never man spake,"—"they that take the sword shall perish by the sword." The O'Leary in question, appears to have fallen, not at the head of his own brave

Inniskillingers, with his helmet on his brow and his sabre in his hand, but in a duel with a lieutenant of the South Mayo Rifles, at that time quartered in the classic neighbourhood of Lough.ea. This gentleman (the lieutenant) acted very handsomely under the circumstances, and, among other things, had a neat tablet erected to his memory in old Kilconnell Church, duly setting forth all his virtues. If report spoke truly, their name was "Legion."

Mrs. O'Leary—strange as it may seem—was never very clear as to the precise cause of the duel, but thought it arose out of a dispute which had for its origin a *shank of mutton*. They would appear to have differed as to the precise mode of rendering it most palatable for supper, and settled that difference by an appeal to arms.

The major, I have since learnt, was a regular fire-eater; a personal friend of "Fighting Fitzgerald" (whoever *he* may have been), and had drilled a hole through many a promising carcase in his day. He was great at the "saw handles," and published at one time a pamphlet upon their

use. It was a bad speculation, however, in a monetary point of view, seeing that he had to pay the printer and publisher (happy men!) by withdrawing for a season from the public gaze. This was all the "saw handles" ever did for *him*, unless, indeed, we include that trifling matter—the loss of his life. Poor O'Leary! he was as brave as a lion, and never turned his back upon friend or foe. "Peace to his shade!" His widow was remarkably short, stout, and good-looking—nearly forty-five, and never denied it! She seemed a stranger to grief, and always spoke of the deceased major with the utmost respect and affection. English by birth, she was Irish through predilection and long residence in the country. She had contracted a slight brogue, and felt proud of it; and so, doubtless, did the defunct O'Leary himself. I believe she loved Ireland with her whole heart and soul, and never felt so happy as when speaking of "Irish right and Irish might, and Saxon shame and guilt." I listened to her with delight, and my young heart stirred within me as she related some dark deed of treachery to

what she called "*her* bleeding country." Of course I soon was an especial favourite with her, and seldom left her side. Poor woman! she was kind to a fault; but as she often said, "kindness was a family failing, and the O'Leary's had certainly got a fair share of it." When the reader has seen a little more of her and her brother-in-law, Stephen, he will probably say the same.

Months passed, and my mother grew stronger as our finances began to fail. The large old house was given up, and neat apartments taken in a quiet and comparatively inexpensive little street. Mrs. O'Leary offered to come and reside with us and pay half of the rent. My mother was delighted. Mrs. O'Leary would be such a cheerful companion. "My dear Biddy," said she, when that lady made the proposition, "My dear Biddy, I most gratefully accept your offer; it is just what I wished, and you will be everything to us: a sister to me, a mother to my (with a gush of tears) children, if God should be pleased to call me. As for rent, do not think of such a



thing ; it is I who will be *your debtor*. Your thirty pounds a-year, what is it ? Nothing !—at least nothing in London. You have a certain position to support, a certain appearance to make, and these, I fear, cannot be done upon so small a sum. No, my dear, stay with us. You are aware that my poor darling husband had his life insured for £5,000, and this I have no doubt will be paid in a few weeks. Till then, let us wait patiently. Five thousands pounds ! think of that Biddy ! Why the very interest of it will meet all our wants, and we can reserve the principal for George and little Grace here.”

“ Ah ! the poor dear major never did anything like that, Ellen ; but then he didn’t expect to die so soon. That spindle-shanked lieutenant was blind—*nearly* blind, I mean—and had it not been that the night before he died O’Leary drank six bottles of port and two of Madeira, and imprudently took in the morning, as he thought, to ‘steady his hand,’ a glass of seltzer water, instead of dashing it strongly with brandy, he’d have made as pretty a spatchcock of that dirty sub as

ever you saw in your life. Heigho ! I suppose his hour was come, and its one comfort he died 'in harness' anyhow. Well, dear, I *will* come and stay with you. I can make myself useful, and will begin this very night. Yes, before this time to-morrow I shall have Georgey perfect at cribbage."

"Oh ! for Heaven's sake," cried my mother, in alarm, for she had a great horror of cards ; "do not teach him that—let it be something else !"

"Very well, my love ; *whist*, if you like it better ; but no, *one* night would never do for *that*. Come, what say you—'Beggar my neighbour ?' "

"You mistake me, dear Biddy," said my mother, mildly ; "I would rather he never learnt a card at all. I can't bear them."

"Oh ! that's a different thing ; of course, if *you* don't like cards we'll say no more about them ; we shall, in fact, omit them from our list of useful acquirements altogether. But tell me, has he an ear, or a voice, or a head with a little brains in it, a quick eye, and a tolerably stout pair of legs ? If so, I can teach him to sing, play,

talk Italian and French, dance, fight, and make love. It will take him some time to be a proficient in all these, but you know the old adage, my love—'Rome wasn't built in a day.' "

"You can do as you please, Biddy, but no cards."

"Very well, then, I'll come to-morrow." And so she did.

Those were our happy days! How soon, alas! did they pass away.

Eight or nine weeks went by, and no missive from the insurance company. A strange misgiving rose up in the mind of the major's widow—they wouldn't pay the money. She communicated her suspicion to my mother, who, in her turn, became uneasy also. What were they to do? Wait another week and see if the company would give any sign of life? They *did* wait, and the company gave the necessary sign. It was, however, of an astounding character. The widow was right; they would *not* pay, at least until a jury of their countrymen decided that they should. We were all three electrified, and well we might,

for quick upon the heels of their refusal came a notice that we were at perfect liberty to bring the matter into the "King's Bench," or any other "Bench" we pleased, for that they should stoutly maintain, and were fully prepared to prove, that my father laboured under a fatal disease when he perfected the policy of insurance, and what was more, *that he knew it*. This was a blow with a vengeance, it nearly crushed my mother to the earth. Nothing for us now but beggary, beggary, or — Philip Marston. And who was this Philip Marston? A drunken profligate, a blackleg, a *roué*, the son of a clergyman of large means in Somerset, long since dead — dead ere he knew of his son's infamy and crimes. Happy father! This man, I need not tell the reader, was the same I introduced to his notice in the opening chapter, and with whom we shall have more to do as this truthful narrative proceeds. But let me now go on.

Mrs. O'Leary soon recovered *her* blow. It seemed—I mean the blow—really to do her good. She became quite animated, and the old smile

once more sat in her eye, and lighted up her whole countenance. My mother stared at her in amazement! Was she mad? Oh, dear, nothing of the kind. "Not a bit of it," as she herself would say, "never more sane in my life." Soon she bustled about, took down her bonnet and shawl; put on the former, wrapped herself comfortably in the latter, and quickly went downstairs. She returned in about an hour radiant with smiles and good humour, embraced my mother tenderly, kissed the baby and myself, and then proceeded to enlighten us as to—what up to the present was a perfect mystery—her own proceedings.

This was the explanation. She had been to a lawyer of great eminence, Mr. Knox Budgett, (an odd name, by the way), and put him in possession of everything. That gentleman snapped his fingers at the Company, laughed, and said "he'd soon make all right;" told her to call again, and then politely bowed her to the door. What creatures we are! Mrs. O'Leary and my mother felt as if the £5,000 were already lodged to their joint credit in the Bank of England.

Mr. Budgett took the necessary steps, and the case came on for trial. "He was so fortunate" (these were his *own* words) "as to secure the services of his distinguished friend, Serjeant Gripper, who, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, had agreed to accept the, to him, nominal 'retainer' of fifty guineas, with five guineas 'refresher' for each day the trial lasted." My mother wondered where all the money was to come from, but the widow cheered her up most gloriously. It was an anxious time for us all. Indeed, I would say that it was an *awful* time, were it not that I have a decided objection to use strong language, at least in these pages. I repeat it, the trial came on! Serjeant Fluster was our opponent, with half-a-dozen silk and stuff gowns at his back. Old Baron Blossom, still alive and merry, took his seat on the bench precisely at ten; had the names of the jury called out, their proprietors duly sworn, and then Gripper, rising with a majestic frown, proceeded, according to Budgett, to demolish the case and the Company with one gigantic blow. Alas! for all human

hopes! Fluster annihilated poor Gripper in less than five hours from the commencement of the trial, and the latter soon after abruptly left the court, covered with confusion and defeat.

To do justice to Gripper, however, I must say that the fault was none of his. He laboured right manfully to show that the deceased, at the time he insured his life, was not aware of the existence of the disease which so soon after proved fatal. That there were nearly one hundred diseases of the heart, as well as could be ascertained, but all of a different character, and they were not without instances of some of the most eminent physicians the country could boast of being in many cases wholly unable to diagnose them. How, in thousands of instances, he would ask, was it possible for a man to know whether a disease were fatal or not? Perhaps the learned serjeant opposite would answer that! How many persons do we read of dropping dead in our streets and alleys who were never suspected of carrying about with them a mortal disease, and whose general health would even prevent such a suspicion existing? "My

learned brother Fluster," he continued, "will doubtless point to Laennec and the stethoscope, but what light has either thrown upon this darkness? None, gentlemen, absolutely none; I say this advisedly, and after due deliberation, and I challenge the defence to prove the contrary."

Mr. Serjeant Gripper proceeded in this strain for about two hours, quoting largely from authorities as he went along, and concluded by a most earnest and touching appeal to the feelings and sympathies of the jury on behalf of a broken-hearted widow and *seven* helpless orphans, together with an innumerable number of minor and disconsolate relatives—offshoots from the parent stem!

Fluster rose, and the court was hushed. *Now* was *his* hour of triumph. Like the duke and the duke's guards at Waterloo, he bided his time; but the fatal moment was come, the magic words "Up and at them" spoken, and to it he went "tooth and nail." I regret that, being particularly hungry at the time, I was betrayed into the unpardonable weakness of rushing out and procuring, at my own individual and proper cost, a



small penny tart, and having been denied re-admission to the court again and again by a short, blotchy-faced man, who smelt very strongly of undiluted gin (and who also seized and ate my tart), until Mrs. O'Leary, who occupied a prominent place in the gallery exactly fronting the Bench, alarmed at my protracted absence, rushed out, and taking hold of me in a rather excited manner, led me back in triumph to my seat. I say that the whole occurrence or occurrences having extended over a period of one hour and twenty-five minutes, much of the learned serjeant's address was necessarily lost to me, and, through me, to my heirs for ever. I understand, however, that it was a masterpiece of burning eloquence, fiery denunciations, and fierce personalities; closely resembling, in my humble judgment, many of the addresses of the present day.

Alas! Fluster had it all his own way. His speech was good, but his witnesses were better—doctors without patients and without character, who would have sworn anything they thought at all likely to advance the interests of their employer.

These gentlemen (and they were extremely numerous) presented in court a highly respectable appearance, having been introduced to a fashionable West-End tailor, at the sole expense of the "Defence." I do not know, of course, what their (the "medicals'") instructions were, but certainly had the lives of the Company, collectively and individually, been at stake, they could not have done more.

At length the judge summed up, and then, by the expression of Mr. Budgett's face (not a very handsome one at the best of times, but when excited, really horrible), I saw that all was over with us. The jury retired—for appearance sake, I suppose—and then returned in three quarters of an hour with a verdict for the "defendants and all costs." And so ended the celebrated case of "Allen v. The Great Moon and Stars Insurance and General Annuity Association," duly incorporated by Act of Parliament, and having a capital of five millions sterling.

My poor mother was distracted. Five thousand pounds gone, lost beyond hope of redemption!

'Twas really awful ! She had not fifty pounds in the world, and Mr. Budgett coolly informed her that the costs on both sides would amount to at least treble that sum. For the first time the major's widow looked a little appalled. One hundred and fifty pounds, indeed ! Where was that to come from ? Heaven knew—not she. Had the affair come off in Galway how different would have been the result ! The Company would, to be sure, have kept the £5,000, but *there*, Mr. Budgett would have been a bold man, indeed, to have thought of costs. Ah ! they manage better in Ireland !

A fortnight passed, and Mr. Budgett sent in his bill—£178 1s. 6d. There were scarcely so many shillings in the house, and we all knew it. Long faces were now the order of the day, but Mrs. O'Leary's was the first to resume its chubbiness. Somehow or another, she never could sorrow long ; it wasn't in her nature. Again she was off this time for nearly a week. When she returned, she told us that we should hear no more of Mr. Knox Budgett, or his bill of costs. And she was right, or we never did.

I ought to have mentioned before, that all this time Mr. Philip Marston was a constant, and, as I could well see, a most unwelcome visitor. I was quick and penetrating, and observed the man. He was about two and thirty, and handsome, with a fine dark eye, and a huge black beard. I was not by any means, a timid little boy, but yet I am free to confess that there was not a single hair in that same beard that would not, at any moment, have made me tremble.

I have already said, or rather, Mr. Marston has said (which, after all, is pretty much the same thing) that he was handsome. Handsome he undoubtedly was, but then it was a rather coarse and bloated style of beauty, and his manners, moreover, could hardly be said to be those of a gentleman. Mrs. O'Leary told me, and she was no mean judge, that he savoured more of the stable than the drawing-room, and was fonder of *dipping* into ardent spirits than *diving* into the "caves of knowledge." He followed no profession, and lived, none knew how. He dressed well, kept a good table, "a fine horse, a fine house," and, like

Master Wilford, now wanted but a "fine wife," and that wife was to be my mother. Poor woman! he was her greatest aversion: yet he succeeded, and by means which the reader already knows.

Mrs. O'Leary was now ill of fever, brought on by over-work, over-anxiety, and over-aborrence of Mr. Marston. And then the truth came out: she had sold her little annuity, to meet the demands of Mr. Budgett, and was now almost penniless. Had it not been for this my mother would never have walked the dreary streets, an outcast, or been driven to the necessity of accepting Mr. Marston for a husband. The poor widow's indomitable energy would have surmounted everything. I need hardly say that we visited her daily, and that these were our happiest moments. She ultimately recovered; and having now nothing further to detain her in London, set out for her adopted home—her own dear Galway. Marston married my mother, and then took us both to his house, Grace being sent to Highgate, where a respectable woman undertook to take charge of her for a small sum.

Of this man I must now speak the truth, though I do so with sorrow, shame, and indignation. Philip Marston was a spendthrift, a gambler, and a drunkard, half-educated, coarse and violent. He was neither cruel nor vindictive, but he was headstrong, passionate, and reckless beyond expression, and, once inflamed by the demon drink, unmanageable and dangerous. At such times my mother would fly into her own room to avoid his fury, for in it he spared neither friend nor foe. I believed he really loved her, though, and often regretted, and strove to atone for his conduct. Hard-heartedness, or deliberate cruelty, could scarcely be attributed to him, and when the frenzy of the moment was over, he became as gentle and harmless as a child. But he had been loosely brought up, though the son of a clergyman, and the strong self-will, unchecked or uncurbed in boyhood, developed itself most fully in after years. The pampered darling of fond, foolish parents, whose every wish was gratified so soon as expressed, he grew up to manhood; not to become their pride and joy, but

to send them down to the grave with broken hearts. Unstable and intractable, he entered upon life; and unstable and intractable he seemed as if he would quit it. To do him justice, however, he had me sent to a classical school in the neighbourhood, where I received the rudiments of what is called "a polite education"—though up to the present moment I have been unable clearly to ascertain what that means—but, beyond this, he took no trouble about me. I might have grown up an Atheist, a Turk, or a Quaker, for all he knew or cared; or succeeded in becoming an exceedingly clever, or even brilliant little boy, without at all exciting his astonishment, or even attracting his attention. So long as my books and myself did not interfere with or inconvenience him, I might have been anything and everything I pleased. Beyond what I have already stated, he treated me as a purely imaginary being. I had no palpable existence, and lived but—to him—in the realms of fancy. To say that he could talk with me, walk with me, laugh with me, or do the most trivial thing with me, was simply out of the

question. I was a nonentity, and nonentities do not usually talk or walk. Such being the case, I kept pretty much out of his way, and tried to preserve my own dignity (for I *was* dignified) and self-respect as much as possible. When not with my mother (and I was *always* with her when *he* was not present) I occupied myself with my books, or slipped out into the crowded streets, where I sometimes met with rough treatment from boys of superior age and dimensions. At other times I used to call, in a fatherly sort of way, upon little Grace, into whose youthful mind I invariably instilled as much good and wholesome advice as I thought it could with safety digest.

And so the time passed, and Marston drank, and gambled, and dissipated worse than ever; and got heavily into debt; and was badgered, and dunned, and processed, and decreed, until at length he was made—what everybody saw he *would* be made—a ruined man.

And now I proceed to take up, or rather *unite*, the threads of my story, which, at the outset,



have been necessarily broken. I began with a dark night and wet streets; a man pursued—the pursuer a weak boy. In other words, my step-father and myself. He had returned home that night drunk, half brutalised, and smarting under some heavy losses at play. 'Twas late, and he tramped slowly up the stairs, swearing as he went. My mother was patiently awaiting his return, and I was preparing my lessons for the following day. He ordered her to her room with an imprecation so horrible that it still rings in my ears. She rose to obey him, and stooped to imprint a mother's kiss upon my forehead as she passed. I turned to look at Marston, and saw his eyes literally blaze with fury. He had bitten his under lip right through, and the blood, spurting out upon his chin, had trickled down his throat and chest. Instinctively I put out my arms to return my mother's embrace, and the action caused something to fall from her bosom. It was my father's portrait! With a yell, Marston sprang forward, but she was before him. "It is mine," she cried, with a sudden energy, that

surprised even *me*, "I loved him a thousand times better than life—*with* life only will I part with *it*."

There was a struggle, short, but decisive—a crushing blow—a faint cry—a falling body—two bounding steps upon the stairs, and away we go, father and son, into the streets, and through the very heart of the great city itself.

---

## CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH THE READER IS INTRODUCED TO MR.  
STEPHEN O'LEARY.

IN order not to weary the reader—whose patience will yet be sorely tried, but who will doubtless submit to that trial with a proper grace, as all good readers do—I would ask him or her, as the case may be, to imagine twelve months to have passed, to suppose also my mother *dead*, dead three months or more, and he or she will have passed over much that might pain, and little that could interest.

Are we with our stepfather? Oh, dear, no! That gentleman is now cooling his heels in a debtors' prison, and cursing his evil fate. Who, then, has opened the door of pity to the houseless orphans? No less a person than our old friend, Mrs. Bridget O'Leary. She, on hearing of my poor mother's illness, started from Galway, and arrived in London a week previous to her death.

She was with her to the last ; received us at her hands as a precious charge, and then closed her eyes in peace. We were living in the neighbourhood of Pentonville, not luxuriously, but happily. Here Mrs. O'Leary gave lessons in music to all willing to receive and pay for them, and everything went on well. We had very comfortable apartments ; but had it been otherwise, little Grace's sweet eyes and the widow's joyous face would have brought sunshine to the gloomiest garret. Added to this, the much-talked-of Mr. Stephen O'Leary was expected in town shortly, and the Major's widow was only too anxious that the Major's brother should be received with becoming dignity and respect. To this end some capital furniture was procured, half cash and half credit ; tailors and milliners talked to ; and tradesmen and brokers invited to send in estimates for all manner of things, from chimney-glasses to kitchen pokers. What a pity that my poor relative's heart and purse never *could* go together !

Three or four weeks and Mr. Stephen arrived. He was the tallest man I ever saw ; had a

splendid crop of hair upon his head, and a fine, honest, manly countenance to boot. Never did I see a frown darken that face, to me for ever dear, and never, I am persuaded, did an envious wish or a treacherous design find lodgement in that noble heart. And yet he was unfortunate, particularly and peculiarly so, and the more I saw of him the less I wondered at it.

It did not then exactly appear *why* Mr. O'Leary had transferred his long body from Galway to London; but my own impression at the time was that he had been making a practising target of some poor devil's body, and unfortunately for both parties had hit the "bull's eye." I subsequently learnt, however, that this was not precisely the case. The fact is, he was shockingly in debt, and Galway had become too hot to hold him. For years he had kept possession, *vi et armis*, of an old tumbled-down barrack, dignified by the name of *Castle*, defying alike bailiff, proctor, and attorney. It would seem also that Stephen had, on one or two occasions, horsewhipped a grocer and a tailor, who had the effrontery to suggest a

settlement of their accounts, after waiting patiently for two years and a-half. Actions were talked of, but as actions in Galway are rarely seriously entertained, especially with an O'Leary for a defendant, our hero snapped his fingers at their threats and thought of them no more.

I believe Stephen was an early riser; at any rate he strode out one bright April morning (May would be more poetical, but even poetry must give place to facts) whistling merrily as he went, when suddenly bounded over a hedge and stood right before him three bailiffs and four armed policemen. "Surrender!" cried one, and down he went. "Resisted!" shouted a second, and he shared his predecessor's fate. A third and a fourth followed in rapid succession. But what mortal could contend with such odds, even though that mortal stood six feet seven inches and the three-eighths? In a few moments O'Leary was surrounded, secured, and nearly borne off. It was early, and but few people were astir, and such as had arisen were at work in the fields, the nearest a half-mile off. But Stephen had excellent lungs, and, on

on this occasion at least, he used them to some advantage. One tremendous shout, that would have awakened the dead in any place save in Galway, an equally loud response, and a dozen or more rough, bare-legged individuals might be seen flying towards the scene of the recent conflict, their tattered garments flapping in the morning breeze, and their spades, shovels, and great pronged forks gleaming in the morning sun. Had Sir John Falstaff been there at the time, and that fear did not make him take to his heels, he would have had a glorious opportunity for filling up his ranks. The fellows cleared hedges, ditches, turf clamps, and all such minor impediments, yelling like tigers, and looking like Turks. Their presence, however, had no very visible effect upon the captors; they were accustomed to such things, and so, like veteran warriors, stood their ground.

"Give up the master, ye divils!" shouted a half-naked savage, with red, matted hair; "give him up, or by—— we'll let daylight through you!"

"Stand back, Jim Fagan," said one of the

policemen, sternly, "stand back, and let us pass." He brought his musket, bristling with a bayonet, to the charge as he spoke. Jim gave a shout, strongly resembling the Red Indian's war-whoop. The bright blade of a shovel flashed upwards towards the sky, and the musket and its proprietor lay harmless upon the ground. This was the signal for a general onslaught; and to it they went, with the eagerness of bloodhounds. A quarter of an hour, and the ground was covered with maimed and bleeding wretches, whilst my worthy relative, mounted on a hack, which he met quietly grazing by the roadside, was hurrying towards Athenry at a speed which defied everything that I know of, the modern steam-engine alone excepted.

The law at that time was rather lax in Galway, and so, beyond transporting two or three of the belligerents, whose character for honesty was rather equivocal, and cautioning the remainder, nothing ever was done in the matter. One of the men died soon afterwards of his wounds and bruises, but that was a trivial circumstance, and



even his friends made light of it. "Sure he died in a good cause," they used to say, "and what more did he (the deceased) want?"

I liked O'Leary immensely, he was so lively and gay, and his brogue so rich, soft, and seductive. Young as I was, I often speculated as to the precise number of hearts he must have broken in Galway and its immediate vicinity; for, to my mind, he was the very *beau-ideal* of a "lady-killer." But Stephen—and to his credit be it spoken—never boasted. There was one thing he had an unaccountable affection for, and that was whiskey punch. He could take twelve stiff tumblers, and still be an "archdeacon;" and I really never felt so happy as when I saw him enjoy himself to that extent.

"Mr. O'Leary," said I, one evening, as we sat together over the fire.

He looked up from a scorching hot glass of punch, which he had just mixed, and fixed his eyes inquiringly upon mine.

"How old are you?"

"Six-and-thirty next March, my boy."

"You do not look so old, sir," said I, with a grin, which I meant for a compliment.

"Why, no," he replied: "I fancy, George, I might strike off half a dozen years, and nobody be the wiser."

"May I ask a favour of you, sir?"

"Certainly! What is it?"

"I am an orphan, sir, and so is little Grace; we have nobody to love us, nobody to love, save you and Mrs. O'Leary; we are happy here,—very, very happy,—and want but one thing to make us almost forget our mother."

"And what is that? Come, speak out, lad."

"Let us call you *Uncle*, and our own Mrs. Biddy, *Aunt*."

"'Pon my conscience, George," exclaimed Stephen, with a laugh, "your request is a mighty odd one, and, at another time it would puzzle me a bit to know what to answer. However, since you both *now* desire it, receive the protection and patronage of our illustrious name. Embrace your relatives!"

We did so, crying all the while for very joy. The widow was likewise deeply affected, and Stephen himself was not wholly unmoved. I saw him walk to the window, thrust his hands deeply into his pockets, and commence whistling "Garryowen and Glory," with so truculent an air that I thought the illustrious subject of the said song must, at some period or another of his eventful life, have seriously displeased my rather eccentric friend.

"And now, uncle and aunt, listen both! To-day I have completed my fourteenth year, and am therefore old enough and strong enough for anything, save idleness and dependence. Grace shall never work (she is too delicate for that), but to-morrow, God aiding me, *I* commence the great battle of life.

Ah, what a scene was there! How did each face turn towards me in astonishment and dismay! How closely did the loving arms of Grace and Mrs. O'Leary encircle me, as if we were about to part for ever! while the Herculean form of Stephen, rising to its full height, and with an oath that I

should not like here to repeat, encircled us all three, and held us tightly to his heart.

I shall never forget that quiet, still night; the nice, small parlour, the cheerful fire, the fine tabby cat, with her handsome, benevolent face basking and purring in its light and heat,—the candles, the books, the pictures, the chimney-glass; but above all, and before all, the little silent group, contemplating each other as if for the last time. Oh, that hour, that hour! How deeply is it graven upon my heart, never, never to be effaced!

I need hardly say that uncle and aunt (for so I shall now call them) were loud in their protestations, and earnest in their persuasions. All was in vain, however, and, without acquainting anyone with my precise determination, the next morning found me at the private residence of a general merchant, named Roberts, who lived in a large, finely-built house, in the neighbourhood of the Old Kent Road, and which is now, I regret to say, occupied by a notorious quack doctor. I walked by the place yesterday (21st September, 1863),

and the name stared at me from a large brass plate as I passed.

My father had been this gentleman's medical adviser (I mean Mr. Robert's, not the quack's), and was, moreover, intimate with the family, so that I felt rather bold in offering my services to him as an assistant. I rang the hall door-bell therefore, in a lively manner, and was quickly answered by a smart-looking young woman, with a small, pretty face, and a clear hazel eye.

"Is Mr. Roberts at home, my dear?" I asked, looking as large and important as I possibly could.

"No, *child*," was the response; "he has been at his business establishment, No. —, Cannon Street, City, these two hours. Do you think you will be able to walk all that way, my fine little fellow?"

Highly affronted at this mode of addressing me, especially as I spoke in a very manly and patronising sort of way, I left, without a word, for No. —, Cannon Street, City, first darting a look of mingled pity and contempt at her of the small face and clear hazel eye.

I was not long in reaching my destination, for I ran all the way, getting many a hearty cuff and curse as I came in unpleasant collision with elderly ladies, bent upon a morning walk, or trod upon the corns of testy old gentlemen.

I found No.—, Cannon Street, City, to consist of three large houses thrown into one (Unity Buildings, if I mistake not, lately occupied its site,) and presenting a very fine appearance indeed. It resembled, to my mind, a “monster house” of the present day, but shorn of its gegaw and gingerbread. I asked for Mr. Roberts (not quite so confidently as before), and was conducted by a demure-looking young man, with black hair, and very little shirt collar, to a door, which we approached by a short flight of steps, and communicating, as I could see, with an office of exceedingly small dimensions. I tapped nervously at the door, with a solitary knuckle, and was invited by a mild, gentle voice, to “come in, please.” I accepted of this invitation, so courteously conveyed, and in a moment found myself standing in the presence of a gentleman,

seated upon a very high stool, with a pencil between his fingers, and a long pen behind his ear. This was Mr. James Roberts, Merchant, of Cannon Street, City, and Old Kent Road.

Mr. Roberts was about fifty-eight or sixty years of age, of the middle height, stout, red-faced, and important-looking. He had a large head—a *very* large head indeed—plump, and—if the term can with propriety be applied to a head—“*fat*.” On the top of this head was a large bare spot, of the diameter of an ordinary sized breakfast-saucer (oh, it’s a fact!) perfectly denuded of hair, and shining, on that particular morning, like the surface of a well-polished mirror. The face was not handsome, neither was it ugly. It was a *passable*, common-place face enough—yes, that’s exactly what it was—“passable and common-place.” Sufficiently good-looking for a Cannon Street merchant (no offence intended to the Cannon Street merchants, collectively or individually) with fifty thousand to his credit at the “old lady of Threadneedle Street” (*why* old lady? I want to know), an interesting young wife, and a charming young daughter,—but

for nobody else that I am aware of. Like head and bare spot, it was large, and down along the jaws, to the very angles, were sparingly scattered what, I suppose, I must call *whiskers*; but which, if the reader will believe me, more closely resembled well saved hay. The forehead was broad, but not high; the nose short, but not snubby; the mouth large, and indicative of great resolution; the lips firm, the chin well set, and doubled; and the eyes of a rather greenish colour, (a little darker than a cat's, perhaps, sharp, keen, and penetrating. Never did I see a head more firmly fixed upon shoulders, and never did I see shoulders better adapted to support that head. Strength and breadth were their eminent characteristics.

As I looked at the man I experienced a sensation similar to that produced by a cold shower-bath when the valve is suddenly opened, for punishment, upon some unhappy wretch. My whole frame trembled violently, and my heart beat time against my ribs to hurried music. Had Mr. Roberts been tall and savage-looking, or small, or



decrepit, or hunch-backed, or blear-eyed—or, in short, anything but what he really was—I should not have minded. But, as he sat upon that stool, calmly awaiting my convenience to speak, I confess that his quiet, matter-of-fact bearing was too much for me. I was but a child, yet I saw at a glance him with whom I had to deal.

“I wish to speak with Mr. Roberts, please, sir,” said I, when I found my tongue.

“*My* name is Roberts, sir,” said he, with a slight inclination of the head.

“I beg your pardon, sir,” I stammered, “but—but—did you ever know a person named Allen?”

“I have known many persons of that name, sir; it is not an uncommon one.”

“I mean a *Dr.* Allen, sir,” I continued; “he died very suddenly, if you remember—in an hospital, sir, not far from this place.”

Mr. Roberts thought for a moment ere he said, “Oh, yes! a gentleman of that name was my medical adviser. He died, I believe, as you say, suddenly, and under peculiar circumstances. May

I ask if your business here is in any way connected with *him*?"

These latter words came out freezingly enough, but I had made up my mind for the worst, and so went on.

"I am his son, sir; there are two of us, little Grace and myself, and we are now dependent upon poor relatives. I have thought of assisting them if I can, but hardly know where to turn. You, sir, being my father's friend, I——"

"There is an institution," said Mr. Roberts, interrupting me, and speaking very measuredly; "there is an institution in Gray's Inn Road, which relieves destitute orphans of good character, and as I presume you both come under that denomination, I will give you a note to the secretary, with a view to having your names brought under the notice of the committee of management. If their funds admit of it, they will probably give you ten shillings. I shall write the note this evening, and you can call for it at any hour you please in the morning."

Mr. Roberts then directed his attention to his

“ledger,” and commenced a vigorous onslaught upon a whole army of figures.

It is now many years since he spoke those words, yet I remember them as distinctly as if it had been but yesterday. I remember *how* he delivered them; the tones of his voice; the quiet wave of his pencil as he turned to his books; the rapidity with which he ran his eye up the credit side of his cash account; and if I remember all these, *can* I forget how *I* stood before him, no longer the little crouching, trembling, frightened suppliant, but the high-souled boy, smarting under the sense of unmerited insult!

“I am no beggar, sir,” said I, with a crimson cheek and a flashing eye; “I need not money, and I ask for none. My father was a gentleman, and I would die rather than solicit any man’s charity. What I seek is *employment*,—something by which I may help those who have already helped me. I thought of you as one likely to need an assistant, and——”

“How old are you?” he asked, turning suddenly round, and measuring me with his eye from

head to foot (it hadn't far to travel), with an expression that plainly said, "Don't attempt to deceive me—its no use."

"Just fifteen, sir."

"Hem! Do you know anything."

"I have read Horace, sir, and Virgil, and Sallust, and——"

"Yes, but (very slowly, and not at all astounded at the extent of my information) what can you *do*? Knowledge is very well, let us see how you can use it. I would much rather you had told me what you knew of English grammar, of "Jackson's Book-keeping," and of "Lloyd's Counting-House made Plain."

"I spell well, sir," I continued, determined at last to make a firm stand: "know arithmetic fairly, and can keep accounts, I am sure, by single entry."

"*Single* entry," repeated Mr. Roberts, contemptuously; "Master Allen, that is a term we London merchants don't understand: but, come, I am willing to give you a trial. Take that sheet of note-paper—not that, the other. Now, sit

down at the opposite side of this desk, and write me a letter of application for the post of junior assistant in our book-keeper's office. I can then judge of your general style and handwriting.

I obeyed with fear and trembling, and succeeded, after twenty minutes (twenty minutes of intense agony, heart, soul, mind, and body alike participating in it) in producing a tolerably neat, well-worded, well-written letter. This I handed him with a white, anxious face, which was reflected back upon me, in all its ghastliness, by a small looking-glass at the opposite end of the office. He read it carefully twice or three times, looked at me, hummed a hymn-tune, and then said—

“You do not write badly, and you express yourself rather well; but something more is necessary, *experience*. This can only be acquired by long, laborious, painful *practice*. I have found it so; so has everybody. That there is no royal road to learning, is as true of the meanest shopboy as it is of the “Fellow” of Oxford or Cambridge. I tell you this, young man (young man! oh!), candidly, because you have said that just now

which pleases me. 'You did not come to *beg*, but to *work*. I like this spirit, and I encourage it whenever and wherever I can. I would rather spend a pound upon you, or such as you, than a penny upon one of those poor, whining little beggars who infest our streets. I *will* help you, provide upon inquiry I find that you deserve it. What clergyman do you know?"

"The Rev. ——"

"Ah! no Dissenting clergyman?"

"No, sir."

"Well, that doesn't matter much. I am a Primitive Methodist myself, but not quite so intolerant as some people suppose me. I will see Mr. ——, talk over the matter with him, and you can call here to-morrow, when you shall be told the result." And, having so said, Mr. Roberts once more addressed himself to his books and accounts.

I stood for a moment at the door, my hand upon the handle, pleased yet confused, and sorely troubled. The sudden change in Mr. Roberts's manner and intentions took me naturally by

surprise, and the immediate prospect of active and profitable employment was not without affording me considerable satisfaction; but with this came the crushing thought that if I became an inmate of the establishment, I should, in all probability, be separated from those I held most near and dear on earth.

I returned home, therefore, saddened and depressed; ate my dinner in silence; retired for half-an-hour (for I felt every instant the tears gushing to my eyes), and throwing myself upon the bed, and burying my face in the pillow, gave way to the sorrow that now filled my soul.

---

## CHAPTER IV.

## SOMETHING OF MR. ROBERTS AND HIS PEOPLE.

THE next morning, and punctually at the hour named, I found myself at Mr. Roberts's door. Our interview was short, but decisive. I was engaged at a salary of twenty-five pounds per annum, with board and lodging, for the first two years. After that, it was to increase according to merit.

I went home and told everything, and great was the consternation of all then and there assembled. They seemed to look upon my conduct in the same light as picking a pocket, or, at any rate, sweeping a crossing; and Mrs. O'Leary, who was usually very demonstrative, especially whenever she considered the dignity of the family was concerned, at once bristled up, and expressed her intention of seeing Mr. Roberts, and having the engagement, so thoughtlessly entered into, cancelled without delay. But Stephen quietly



stopped her, observing, and with much truth, that a bargain was a bargain, and that he'd as soon break his neck any day as break his word. There I believed him.

I will not weary the reader by telling him how the week passed, of the kisses we interchanged, and the tears that we shed at parting. Mr. O'Leary accompanied me to Cannon Street, and gave me up in due form to the head book-keeper, a thin, sharp-looking little man of about sixty, with a great deal of iron-grey hair upon his head, and a great deal of nose upon his face. Stephen introduced himself as Mr. O'Leary, of the county of Galway, and told him that the youth he held by the hand was a near relative of his own, and a very admirable boy to boot. His declaration elicited from the head book-keeper the gratifying intelligence that his name was Snaggs, and that the "admirable boy" in question, by attention to his business, and a respectful demeanour towards his superiors (himself, of course, amongst the number) might one day get on. To this my uncle replied that he trusted the "admirable boy"

would always conduct himself as a Christian and a gentleman, and, as such never fail in his respect to those whom Providence had placed over him.

Having bowed very pleasantly and very politely to the old gentleman, and told him that "should his wandering footsteps ever stray" towards Galway, he would be happy to see him in the home of his fathers, O'Leary Castle, he withdrew, his fine manly bearing producing a most favourable impression upon all the clerks as he passed through the outer offices into the street.

And now I am afloat upon the great ocean of life, where so many have been suddenly and hopelessly wrecked. Let me hold fast by the rudder of sincerity and truth, and all *must* go on well. With a "single eye," and a simple, earnest faith in God, and God's promises, what has man or boy to fear?

There were a great many men and boys in Mr. Roberts's establishment, whose salaries varied from five to fifty pounds a year. Mr. Snaggs, I found, by entries in the ledger, drew sixty-two pounds ten per quarter, and placed the ten

shillings in a money-box, which went to the support of some missionary station, which I remember was a great many thousand miles away. I thought this odd at the time, seeing that there were some millions of souls at *home*, perishing for lack of that Word which Mr. Snaggs, and those who thought with him, were so liberally and thoughtfully supplying to their antipodes. But now I know better.

I learnt that the young men boarded in the house and slept *outside*, and that the boys (I was, greatly to my mortification, one of this latter class) boarded in the house, and slept *inside*. This arrangement seemed to agree but indifferently with the former, for when they came to Cannon Street in the mornings, the majority looked as if they had had no sleep the previous night. They yawned frequently during the day, coughed, expectorated (I beg the reader's pardon for using the word), and, when the eye of Mr. Roberts, or the eye of Mr. Roberts's deputy, was for a moment withdrawn from their pale, suffering faces, rushed up to various show-rooms to execute, with the

utmost promptitude, a great number of imaginary orders, and spent the time in drinking from a cracked tea-cup a white, effervescing matter, which I have been since led to regard as Seidlitz powder, which, at the time, I was disposed to look upon as something else. I remarked too, that those gentlemen exhibited an irrepressible desire to execute orders of a *Monday* morning; and this gratifying circumstance arose, doubtless, from the fact, that Mr. Roberts's customers preferred patronising him on that day to all others. Young men, in monster and other houses is not this the case? Undoubtedly. No wonder then, if you look pale, wretched, and weary on that day, and pray fervently for night or *Sunday*.

After a week's experience of men, boys, and things, I arrived at the conclusion that Mr. Roberts was wholly unaware of my existence; that Mr. Snaggs, in whose office I was, sometimes nodded to me of a morning as he hung up his coat and hat, and rarely spoke to me during the day; that Mr. Rogera, the general superintendent, had a tipsy wife, who frequently waylaid him in the

evenings on his way to his lodgings, for they lived apart, and demanded a shilling to procure bread for herself and her starving family; that Mr. Rogers never replied to Mrs. Rogers, but walked on, apparently as unmoved as the flags under his feet; that Mrs. Rogers on divers occasions assaulted Mr. Rogers, and that Mr. Rogers was never known to retaliate; that Mrs. Rogers's story about the starving children was all a fiction, as she never had a child save one, a dissipated youth of twenty, who, after whitening his father's locks, and nearly breaking his father's heart, was now employed as a waiter at an oyster-shop in a remote corner of the City, where his services no doubt were properly appreciated. About the same time I became also conscious of the fact that Mr. Jones, the gentleman with the small allowance of shirt collar, was a sneak; that Mr. Clarke was a hypocrite; and that an overgrown, awkward-looking boy, named Jackson, couldn't be depended on. I now know that Master Jackson's father had been a porter in the "house," and have a distinct recollection of Master Close

twitting him with the fact. From that day forth Master Close was no favourite of mine.

There was one gentleman, and only one of two, who succeeded in winning my affection at Mr. Robert's, and under his notice I was frequently brought. This was Mr. Loader, the cashier, a mild-looking gentleman of about five and fifty, with narrow shoulders and a stoop. He was, I understood, a widower with a family, entirely of girls, who were very pretty, and very amiable, and lived cosily together in a nice little house in the neighbourhood of the Euston-road. Mr. Loader took a fancy to me, and seemed pleased with any little attention my subordinate position enabled me to show him. We were frequently together, as he borrowed me from Mr. Snaggs for an hour each day, to count and check off his cash previous to lodging it in the Bank of England. I thought those hours very happy ones, and returned with somewhat saddened feelings to my own office and Mr. Snaggs.

I had not been there more than a month when the cashier told me that he liked me very much,

and would befriend me to the extent of his power. He expressed a hope, moreover, that I would give myself at once to God and His service, and to rest satisfied that then "all things would work together for good." He sometimes kept me for five minutes while (after carefully bolting the door) he engaged in simple, fervent prayer in my behalf, and ended by committing me to the care of Him who is peculiarly the "Father of the fatherless." And from all this I concluded that Mr. Loader was a pious man.

Mr. Snaggs was very irritable, and an erasure, however slight, or a mistake, however unimportant, was sure to draw down upon me his tongue and temper. He was fretful, garrulous, and I am persuaded, inwardly dissatisfied with himself and every other member of the human family. I never ventured to ask him if he were married, but often thought that if he were, I could pity his wife and children from the bottom of my heart. He was not what is termed a passionate man, far from it; but there was a biting sarcasm about everything he said, that to me was ten thousand

times more awful than the fiercest denunciations or the most terrible reproofs. He often cut me to the quick at the very time that I was doing every thing in my power to give him satisfaction. How I merited all this his own heart best knew, for never did child strive harder, or watch closer than I strove and watched to save him one moment's pain, anxiety, and trouble. Yet I bore it all, quietly and unrepiningly bore it. No murmur or complaint ever escaped my lips, and I am now thankful that in the midst of much evil and little good, I can look back upon that time and say so.

Mr. Loader took me home with him one evening to tea, and as we went along he told me that he had been a widower for eight years, and that his late wife was neice to a rich bishop to whom she never spoke, and cousin to a noble earl whom she never saw. This was not said in a boastful manner, but rather as if to beguile the time, and nothing else. His house was small, but extremely neat. There was a nice grass plot before the door, and a beautiful little garden in the rear. When I got inside I was struck with



the extreme simplicity of everything I saw ; the tables, chairs, pictures, all so plain and pretty.

There were three girls in the parlour, and the fourth—the housekeeper of the family—soon joined us, quite red and rosy from the tea-urn. The eldest was Miss Jane, the second Susan (and this was the housekeeper), the third Mary, and the fourth Fanny. How well did the names correspond with the furniture—pretty but plain !

“ This is our friend, George Allen,” said Mr. Loader, by way of introduction : “ My daughter Jane, and her sisters.”

I shook hands with the girls all round, and tried to look as if I were used to it.

“ Are you not late, father ?” asked Mary, taking his hat and putting it out of sight.

“ A few minutes, my child — not more. Fletcher and I had a talk together before coming away, and I dare say that delayed us a little.”

“ Oh ! poor Mr. Fletcher,” cried all the girls in a breath ; “ and how is he ?”

“ Never saw him look better,” replied their father. “ Why, he’s absolutely getting fat.”

"Oh! what nonsense you talk, papa!" said Susan. "Mr. Fletcher is a perfect mountain of flesh. I never saw anybody like him in my life."

"Probably not, my love," replied Mr. Loader, cheerfully; "but George and I, who have walked nearly two miles, would be glad to see our tea just now."

A pleasant smile, a quiet opening and closing of doors, and tea was upon the table. I think I never enjoyed a tea more in all my life. I sat near Fanny, the youngest, and helped her to cake (nice hot cake, too!), and bread and butter, and shrimps, and periwinkles, and felt really and truly happy. After tea, one of the girls read a chapter from the Bible, every word of which fell distinctly upon my ears, and some of it, I trust, reached my heart.

In the course of the evening, Mr. Loader told me many things about the Roberts family, which I had not previously known. For instance, that the tall, stout, fair young man, who called two or three times a-week at Cannon Street, was Mr.

Richard Graham, Mr. Roberts's nephew, a very wealthy, careless, good-humoured, off-hand kind of youth, who could not be induced to follow any profession, and was at the present moment leading, if not a very dissolute, at any rate, a very idle sort of life. He had been frequently offered a partnership in the concern, but had always declined, on the ground of his dislike to, and unsuitability for, business. He occupied furnished lodgings in St. James's, and was a constant frequenter of the theatre and ball-room. Mr. Loader sighed as he said this; for, on principle, he was opposed to all such places of amusement, and thought that no "good thing" could come out of them. Perhaps on this particular point the good man was a little narrow-minded and prejudiced.

But Graham was a favourite with him, nevertheless. Another gentleman, whom I had but once seen, and who had a short time ago entered the family, apparently to reside there permanently, was a Mr. Stephen Dorricks, and for whom Mr. Loader appeared to entertain the profoundest

respect and esteem. He did not seem to know very much about him, or what precise position he was to occupy at Mr. Roberts's, but believed that he should superintend the education of that gentleman's only daughter, who was by a former marriage. He spoke of this stranger, Dorricks, as a man of sincere piety and sterling worth, and one who was likely to be very useful in his "day and generation." He was a great scholar, too, and had travelled, and was much looked up to by Mr. Roberts, and, indeed, by all who knew him. Further than this, Mr. Loader could not go. He did not say much of Eveleen Roberts (the daughter), as I had seen her frequently, and had already begun to worship her—at a distance. She knew my history, and had a very faint recollection of seeing my father once or twice at the Old Kent Road. "He was an old friend," she said, "of her dear, lost mamma, and, as such, she should always cherish his memory." To this circumstance I attribute much of the kindness and consideration I received at her hands. But, to return.

“Is Mr. Dorricks a clergyman, sir?” I asked.

“Oh dear, no! but he is quite as good. Should you like to be introduced to him?”

“Oh, of all things!” I replied.

“Well, that is easily managed. To-morrow is the anniversary of Fanny’s birthday, and Mr. Dorricks and a few other friends will be here. You can come.”

Of course I felt very thankful to Mr. Loader. I like his daughters very much. They had all auburn hair, and soft brown eyes, and such a sweet and gentle expression in them, that their faces seemed to me the handsomest faces in the world. But Fanny was the beauty, and the pet of the family; for all families have a beauty, and a pet. Which of my readers will dispute that?

This young lady was about thirteen, extremely retiring in her manners, with a very lovely, but a very serious little countenance. She had not much colour in it, and that colour was ever varying, varying. She scarcely spoke during the whole night, and I saw that her elder sister

watched her anxiously ; and that once or twice, when she seemed in pain, and uttered a low moan, Miss Jane gently drew her to her bosom, and laid her head upon her shoulder, as tenderly as if she had been a sleeping infant. This little incident touched me sensibly, and I thought of it all the way home.

The next day the "pet" was seriously ill, so that there was no party, and, of course, no Dorricks ; and months passed before I had an opportunity of making his acquaintance.

A whole year went by at Mr. Roberts's, but nothing of any particular moment occurred. I grew in stature, and I think in favour also. Mr. Snaggs was as cross and as irritable as ever ; but this could not be helped, as, do what I would, or could, the results were, in his case, precisely the same. I despaired of making anything of him, but still, I trust, I did my duty by him in all things.

Miss Eveleen was often in Cannon Street. Her father evidently wished her to be near him, and she has often sat for hours in that memorable

little office by his side. She was very friendly with us all, and was, in turn, an especial favourite with everybody.

“George,” said she, one day, giving me a note which Mr. Roberts wished to be posted without delay, [Jackson wanted to take it to the office, but I sternly bade him put it down, and shortly afterwards bore it there myself], “George, I must call upon your little sister, Grace, and your aunt, very soon. I have heard of them from Fanny Loader, and regret that I have not been able to see them sooner.”

I bowed; and, with a smile, Eveleen went away. She *did* call, and they were all delighted with her. Stephen pronounced her perfection itself, and *I* had no idea of contradicting him.

I may mention, in passing, that Mr. O’Leary was now regularly employed upon a sporting paper of some repute, and was earning a decent livelihood. I hope its proprietor prized him as he deserved.

I seldom saw Philip Marston, my step-father. He was at this time living, I believe, somewhere

about Holloway, rioting, and dissipating, whenever and wherever he could, without one thought of Grace or me, or of his own future. He had been "abroad" for nearly twelve months, and somebody said that he had there discovered the principle of "perpetual motion." *My* previous knowledge of the gentleman, however, led me to regard this statement as exceedingly improbable, and I have never since had occasion to alter my opinion.

Jackson (the large boy) and I, greatly to my disgust, slept together. He was always praising everybody, from Mr. Roberts himself, down to the boy who cleaned the knives and forks. According to his statement, they were all a perfectly white flock, he being the only black sheep amongst us. I often thought that he meant the very reverse, but I felt I ought to try and give him credit for sincerity, though I own I found it hard enough to do so.

He was a huge fellow, this same Jackson, tall, bony, very much freckled, and, to do him but simple justice, marvellously ill-favoured. He was



perfectly aware of this, and often told me so with a smile of the sweetest resignation.

Mr. Jackson was fond of soup, if pea-soup, all the better, and would go any length to secure a bowl full of it in the evening, after the toils and troubles of the day. Some men drown their cares and forget their sorrows in gin. Jackson, "wiser in his generation," did both in—soup.

He was seldom prepared to devote any attention to it until I was about retiring to my pillow, and was not unfrequently forced to resort to the process of re-heating it over our common fire. This, often repeated, became to me a complete nuisance, and I told him so. Meekly he put away his little saucepan, and I never saw it more. I thought, however, that from that night he regarded me with an interest I had never observed before.

---

## CHAPTER V.

## MR. O'LEARY'S STORY.

THERE is a shadow upon the house of O'Leary, and his hearth looks cold and desolate. Little Grace is ill, and we are all distracted. She is our idol, and that very thought brings bitter sorrow to our souls. Oh, look round your own home circle, reader, of whatever rank or grade you be, and see if there be not there a gap once filled by an "idol,"—if there be not a vacant chair once occupied by an "idol"—loving arms which once encircled an "idol," and then say, can our idol live? Oh no; we knew she could not. The world's wealth could not keep her with us, and now I look back upon it, I can say, "God be thanked for that."

"She died and was buried."

With this brief sentence let me try in these memoirs to forget her. It is a subject that I fear to touch, much less to dwell upon.

Were I writing for my own pleasure, I should here mention many things that I deemed at the time highly important, but as I write chiefly for the amusement of an ill-used public, I will spare it that infliction. I look back six or eight months, and see myself in a brown cloth jacket and trousers, a fancy striped vest, a light necktie, and half boots, perched day after day upon a high stool, from which I used to drop down like a little cock-sparrow as occasion required.

I should like to see that stool now, with its well-worn leather cover and deeply-notched legs and thighs. Poor, abused, unretaliating stool, what memories do you conjure up !

And here I think I ought to say a few words about Mrs. Roberts. Well, she was very pretty, and very amiable, with lovely eyes and a fine temper. She was somewhere about five-and-twenty, but scarcely looked so much. Her husband, Mr. Roberts, was a rigid but not a gloomy Methodist, and sometimes, I believe, reasoned with her as to the folly of going to places of public amusement. She always listened with

respectful deference to his arguments, owned their soundness, and promised to practice greater self-denial for the future ; but a concert was given, or an opera announced, and away went poor Mrs. Robert's resolutions to the winds of heaven. She was passionately fond of music, as the phrase is, and when in a serious or thoughtful mood (which wasn't very often) would take her harp and cause its wild strings, like so many tongues, to almost speak the words of the sweet Psalmist of Israel. Generous, open-hearted, but impetuous, this woman was at once to be admired and pitied.

In early youth she had placed her affections upon a young man of her own age and position, but poverty coming upon him like a blight, he left his home never to return, and she shortly afterwards married Mr. Roberts.

Such was her history so far as I knew it.

Mr. Loader at last gave his little party, to which Mr. O'Leary had been invited, and then, for the first time, I met Stephen Dorricks. He was a tall, pale young man, with soft, brown, curling hair, and a singularly intellectual cast of

countenance. He looked seven or eight-and-twenty, but was probably two or three years younger. I found him a calm, quiet, self-possessed man; a clear, close, logical reasoner, and, as it seemed to me, a profound thinker. He spoke little, but that little was always to the purpose, and seldom failed to carry conviction with it. His language was graceful, his matter weighty, and his manner that of a highly accomplished, well-bred gentleman. He was free and unembarrassed, and there was an unstudied, natural grace about him that charmed us all. He was courteous even to a fault, and bowed with the utmost deference to the opinions of others, no matter how clumsily or indifferently expressed.

As we shall yet have much to do with this man, it will be better that we leave the further delineation of his character to time and these pages.

Dorricks by no means threw a gloom over our festive party; on the contrary he was easy, unassuming, affable, and winning. We were all, therefore, as merry as our hearts could wish, though, if the truth were known, I was in constant

apprehension of an oath or two slipping from O'Leary in the course of conversation. To my inexpressible delight, however, he talked on for two or three hours, and had only once to check himself in the act of exclaiming, "By——, sir, it's a fact."

The family enjoyed him in a quiet way—none the less for being quiet—and he seemed fully bent upon enjoying himself. He ate and drank, and talked and sung as if these were the special ends for which he had been created, while Fanny and the rest laughed and clapped their hands, and applauded him as if he were a favourite actor.

"Oh, he's so funny!" exclaimed Mary, "who can help laughing at him? Are all Irishmen like him?" she asked of me in a whisper.

"Well, no," I said, smiling. "I suppose in Ireland there's a mixture of the grave and gay as well as in other countries."

"Do you think so? Well, who could have thought it? Don't they sleep with the pigs there, and only wash their faces once a month?"

“ Whose faces ? The pigs or their own ? ”

“ Why, their own, of course. ”

“ Well, I am happy to enlighten you. The Irish as a rule do not sleep with their pigs, and they usually wash their own faces night and morning. If my little friend’s curiosity is still ungratified, I may add that the men do not generally wear tails, nor the women tattoo themselves like wild Indians. ”

“ But do they not shoot people there occasionally ? ”

“ Yes, alas ! But in how many instances the poor wretches are driven to it by oppression, let landlord and agent tell. If they do not, the last great day will answer for them. But come, do not we shoot, and bludgeon, and maim, in our own favoured England, too ? and yet we hold up our heads as if we were the most guiltless nation on God’s earth. ”

“ My little friend ” sighed and was silent.

“ How now, conspirators, ” said Susan, gaily, and pushing her chair close to ours, “ what

mischief are you plotting? Take care you don't blow up the Parliament as that wicked Guy Fawkes tried to do."

"What about Parliament?" asked Stephen, turning round, for he had caught the last words.

"If it's the old one on College Green you mean, I'm sorry to inform you on the authority of a Galway gentleman that it went to the dev—dogs, long ago."

"How did that happen, sir?"

"How did it happen is it? 'pon my conscience I've hardly the patience to tell you. Sure didn't Pitt, and Castlereagh, and the pack of them bargain for and sell the poor old country as if it were a horse at Ballinasloe fair; aye, and divide the profits among them, too, the villains. The deuce a bit of good it did them for all that, and there's more than me can tell you the same."

"What a pity!" cried one of the girls.

"It was a *murder*, my darling, and that's the truth of it. But come, there's no use in brooding over misfortune; so lift us a stave, somebody."

But no stave was lifted. In Mr. Loader's house



a song was considered profane, and Stephen's suggestion was not entertained.

"Let us have an adventure, uncle," said I, after a pause.

"Well, I'm not much in the humour to-night, my boy," he returned, "and I would much prefer somebody else favouring the company with a little of their experience. Our philosophical friend in the corner (alluding to Dorricks), for instance."

But Dorricks politely and respectfully declined, and having united his entreaties with mine and the girls that Mr. O'Leary would do something to amuse us for the next hour or so, that gentleman, after a little hesitation intended for bashfulness, but which never could have been mistaken for it, began in something after the following manner:—

A Galway gentleman takes the world as it comes, and it can never take him unawares. Were an alligator (which the saints forbid) to attack him in his best parlour, or an earthquake to swallow up all his wearables, he would stick his hands in his bre—trousers' pockets, and whistle as loudly as Balaam did when the ass

bid him tell the time. I once knew a Spiddal man (he was a tinker, if I remember rightly) who slept twenty-eight days at a bout, and who, when informed of the fact, coolly remarked that it was now time that he got something to drink, and he drank to some purpose, too, for that night he slept in jail; and, a fortnight after, was transported for breaking a policeman's head. I mention this, in order that you may thoroughly appreciate our character, and clearly understand why I threw up my window on a boisterous December night, in the year of Our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and nineteen, when torches were blazing, and women screaming, and men swearing, up into the darkness of a winter's sky. The place was Portumna Hotel—second-best bedroom, front—the time, half-past eleven, or thereabouts, if the hands of a most doleful imitation of a French timepiece, which stared at me from the chimney-piece, was to be trusted. As it's not here now, I don't mind saying that I never trusted it much, and I have not yet succeeded in finding the man who did.

“If I had time, I would tell you something about Portumna, which would be mighty interesting; but, as it is now getting late, I think I had better push on.

What the deuce is all this about? thought I, as I popped my head out of the window, experiencing, at the same time, sundry sharp twinges at the shoulder blades, and in the immediate vicinity of the jaw, conveying, in an unmistakable manner, the gratifying announcement that rheumatism and tic-doloureux were not far off—“What’s the matter, boys?” I shouted; is the town on fire, or are you drunk, or mad?”

“‘Divel a bit of it, yer honor,’ responded at least fifty voices; ‘and its yerself that knows it well. Hurrah for the French—long life to Boney, and success to him, too—down with the English—down with their Lord Liffenant—down with their Parlimint—down with their landlords—down with their agents—down with their middle-men—down—down with everything!’

“Such were the sounds that issued from scores of throats, as ill-washed and ill-clad humanity

crowded round the doors of the 'Portumna' on that eventful night.

" 'What's the matter?' I again demanded.  
'Is Portumna Castle on fire?'

" 'Is it the Castle you mane, sur? Its as firm as a rock. No man living will see Portumna Castle burnt.'

" (It was burnt seven years after, notwithstanding my friend's prediction.)

" 'Hurrah! Three cheers for Boney! He's come over the water to save us from English rule—to give us plenty of beef, and whisky, and tay, until we get as big and as lazy as our neighbours. Arrah! stand off my toes, Mickey Brady! do ye think I've got no feeling in me?'

" 'Who is it? Who has come?' I asked, for the third time; and I was answered by a half-tipsy fellow, hiccuping—

" 'And the French will come agen,  
Says the Shan Van Vocht.  
And they'll bring ten thousand men,  
Says the Shan Van Vocht.  
And with powder, and with ball,  
For our rights they'll loudly call.  
Don't you think they'll hear us then?  
Says the Shan Van Vocht.'

“ ‘Mad! mad as March hares!’ said I, about .  
to close the window, and once more court my pillow, when suddenly a gleam of light shot upwards to the sky, illuminating the dreary streets with all the brightness of a July sun; while a cheer, long, loud, and heart-stirring, burst from a thousand chests, and two thousand legs executed a peculiar sort of dance, known only to their proprietors, and one thousand hands firmly grasped one thousand shillaleghs, which they frantically flourished above their heads, and then suffered to descend with a dull, heavy thud upon the skulls or shoulders of their excited comrades.

“ I looked to the distant hills, and saw they were a sheet of fire, blazing upwards and downwards, occasionally obscured by smoke or exhalations, and then bursting forth more wildly and terribly than before. I looked beneath me and saw a sea of upturned faces, red in the glare of that huge bonfire, and expressive of every devilish passion that can stir the human heart. I looked to the fields beyond, and saw, by that ruddy glare, a solitary goat, quietly nipping the scant

herbage, unmoved by light, noise, and tumult. That poor goat taught me a lesson that I have not yet forgotten.

"I closed the window. 'Some great man has come, that's plain,' I muttered, as I hurried on my clothes, 'or they'd never light the hills. Who can it be? The young Lord Clanricarde? But, no, that cannot be; for he hasn't been out of the country for the last seven months, to my knowledge; and, even if it were him, what has he got to do with the French, and the Shan Van Vocht? Nothing.'

"I had got thus far in my category of questions and answers, when I heard the window of the room immediately over my own thrown open, and a thick, guttural voice say, in what, at the time, I considered a particularly bad French accent,—  
'*Merci, messieurs! mais j'ai faim, et—*

"The remainder was lost to me in the cheer that rent the heavens, which the poor Frenchman, if such he was, acknowledged by—'*Merci messieurs, je vous remercie.*'

“ ‘Mercy! does his honour and glory think we’re going to kill him, after coming all the way from Saint Halleena to save us from the Saxons?’ exclaimed a most truculent-looking ruffian of six feet or more; ‘let me see the man that wid touch a hair of your head, and I’d——’ He illustrated his unfinished threat by dealing a blow each to two men of about the same size and weight as himself, and prostrating them helplessly in the ditch. The same two men scrambled to their feet a minute afterwards, and cheered as lustily as if nothing had happened.

“ ‘I heard a waiter careering along the passage leading from my bedroom to three or four others, and I rushed out and seized him. The poor devil made a duck at the stairs, but I pinned him firmly against the wall, and held him there.

“ ‘Who’s in the house, you rascal?’ I thundered; ‘and what’s the meaning of all this infernal hubbub?’

“ ‘The man gasped feebly, and I perceived that I was holding him by the throat.

" 'Speak !' I continued, ' or I'll shake the life out of you.' He looked at me with dilated eyes, but said nothing.

" 'Who's in the house? Who's the Frenchman with the bad French? What are those ragamuffins shouting for? Out with it, or, as sure as my name's O'Leary, I'll make a vacancy in the list of waiters to this establishment in less than five minutes.'

" Another gasp—another stare with the af-frighted eyes—a quivering of the lower jaw, was all he could accomplish.

" I brought him to his knees, and his limbs shook so that I expected every moment to see him fall forward upon his corpse-like face.

" 'Now,' said I, ' Pat O'Brien, you've known me for a long time.'

" 'Si—si—si—since you were born,' he at length stammered out.

" 'Very well, then. Now, during all that time, did you ever know me to break a promise fairly made?'

" 'Ne—ne—never, yer honour.'



“ ‘ Good, again. And [didn't I promise just now to throttle you, unless you told me what all this cursed noise and humbug was about? ’

“ ‘ You—you—di—di—did, Mr. Stephen, jewel, bu—bu—but you won't do it—I'm getting better now ; and if you'll take your knuckles from my wind-pipe, I'll tell you all, and welcome. Sure a post-boy dhruv up about an hour ago, whin you wor snoring in your warm bed, and I sayriously thinking of following your example, and out gets a little man. with a sharp nose, and gray hair, brushed back off a mighty sour-looking face. He seemed greatly frightened as he pushed past me into the hall, and his pipe-stopper legs (the divil-such legs I ever saw in my life, the Lord pardon me for swearing) shook under him as he went up the stairs two at a time, just as mine did when you boned me a minute ago. The masther, who could hardly keep from laughing at the poor scared little figure, showed it to '27,' and I showed the post-boys and horses to the stables.”

“ ‘ Who is he, boys,’ I axed, as we got in

among the straw, and pulled out our dudheens ;  
'he seems a little frightened, poor gintleman.'

" 'And small blame to him,' said one of them  
—(his name's Myles Casey, Misther Stephen, a  
first cousin of my own be the mother's side, and I  
hope he'll come to a good end, though I have my  
doubts, and I often told him so)—'and small  
blame to him, and its yerself, Paddy O'Brien,  
that u'd be frightened too, if you only saw all the  
poor little man passed through this blessed night.  
'pon my faith, he stood it like a brick.'

" 'What did he stand, Myles?' ses I; 'and  
what do you mane?'

" 'Mane! Is it what I mane, you want to  
know? Why, didn't a couple o'hundred of those  
murtherin' thieves folly him from Mount Bellew  
Bridge to within a mile of this, cheering and  
hurrying, and throwing up their ould caubeens  
into the air, until we thought they were going to  
lay hands on him, and carry him away, bōdy and  
bones. And, troth, they were near doing that  
same, too; but we laid about us with the whips,  
and scattered them like so many yelping curs.

But, bedad, they wor too able for us, for they used to skelp across the ditches and bogs, and one place or another, and meet us agin at a bend of the road, and cheer and hurray as loud as ever the divels. Once, at Drummartin Cross roads, they tried to cut the traces, and draw the carriage, but, my dear life, up started the little man, and out popped the brown muzzle of a big horse-pistol, and that cowed them a bit. One by one, they dropt off, but they'll be at our heels again, whilst you'd say Jack Robinson.'

" 'But what did they folly him for?' sez I.  
' Who is he?'

" 'Bedad,' sez he, 'they think he's Boney himself. And perhaps they're right.'

" 'Holy Virgin! you don't say so?' sez I.

" 'Troth, do I,' sez he.

" 'His own self?'

" 'His own self. By the mortal, here's some of those divels tearing up the hill like mad! Run, Paddy! for the love of heaven, and lock him in his room, or they'll have him out on their shoulders, and up the mountains before anyone can stop them.'

“ ‘I med a rush from the stable into the house, up the stairs, along the passage, and slap bang into ‘27.’ The little man was sitting in a corner, upon his own portmanteau, taking snuff, and chattering to himself. ‘Oh, yer kilt and murdered, yer honour’s glorious majesty,’ sez I; ‘and may yer live long and die happy, and may—the Virgin forgive me, what am I saying?—Oh, yer majesty, get into the garret, or out on the slates, or up the chimney, or into the barn, or pigstye, or somewhere or another, for, be the piper, if ye don’t, one of them divels below will have yer illegant top boots, and yer aiqually illegant legs thrust into his breeches pocket, and be pegging away with you to Castlebar at the rate of six miles an hour, before you can say ‘trapstick.’

“ ‘He took his portmanteau from under him, flung it at me, but said nothing.’

“ ‘Bundle up, yer majesty,’ sed I, entraytingly; ‘do, if you love France and me. Consider your precious life, and don’t let them dirty spalpeens put a finger upon the finest ginerall and the most accomplished gintleman of the age.’

“ ‘Aha,’ sed he, throwing his snuff-box at my head, and making a vicious kick at—no matter what—‘Aha!’

“ ‘Be me conscience, they’re here already, and running like divels that have lost their tails. Mother of glory, what’ll become of us at all, at all?’ I med answer.

“ ‘Suddenly the little man turned pale and jumped up. He heard them screeching outside, and ran to the window a bit and peeped out. He then came back with his hands in his pockets, and commenced laughing and dancing round the room till I thought he was fairly cracked. How long he’d have kept up the fun I’m sure I don’t know, but I thought it time to stop him, so I caught him round the body, and tried to lift him off his legs; but—would you believe it, Mr. O’Leary?—he was too quick for me, for he spun himself round in a second, faced me full, gave me a slap on each cheek, and a kick that sent me half way down the stairs, little the wiser, and a great deal the sorer for my interview with him.’

“ ‘And is this all you know?’

“ ‘All! Faith, I think it's a far sight too much. But listen, master, jewel, how they shout! That I mightn't, if I don't think some of them's scrambling up the ould water-pipe to get at him.’

“ ‘I did not wait to hear any more from my friend O'Brien, but hurried downstairs and out of doors as quickly as I could. Sure enough, there was the old fellow at the window, top-boots, snuff-box, and all, with his right hand upon his left breast, bowing gracefully to the mob below, who cheered and yelled until it seemed as if Bedlam had fairly broken loose.

“ ‘Whom do you take him for?’ I asked one of the nearest bystanders.

“ ‘The devil a one of me knows,’ said the man with a puzzled air; ‘maybe it's the king of Morocco for all I know.’

“ ‘Hardly him, I should think; you see, he looks like a Frenchman.’

“ ‘Oh, aye, like enough,’ he replied, in a hard, callous tone; it's all one to me.’

“‘If you think so, why are you here?’

“‘Why am I here, is it?’ he asked so fiercely that I dropped back a bit to get a better look at him, for I began to feel by no means sure of my man: ‘I’ll tell you why I am here. It’s because all places are alike to me now, and why not stand before a grand hotel, where there’s lights and divarshon, and plenty of food and drink, as well as anywhere else? Perhaps I’ll be taken up by the ‘Peelers’ for it by-and-bye and charged with being a vagrant, as they call it, at the next sessions or assizes.’

“‘Come into the house and take a drop to keep the cold out, anyhow,’ said I, thinking it just as well to be civil to him.

“We turned in, and I ordered whisky, sugar, and hot water to be paraded, together with the remnant of a roast fowl, to which I had been paying my addresses that evening.

“My new acquaintance ate voraciously, and it was plain to be seen that he was not used to luxuries.

“When he had satisfied the cravings of hunger,

I mixed him a good stiff tumbler, stirred up the fire, and seeing that he looked dull, asked him if I could do anything for him.

“ ‘No, sir,’ he replied, in low despairing tones, ‘the time is past for all that. If you could bring me back my wife, my darling Rose, who died of a ragin’ fever, and whose poor clay lay for two days and two nights at the back of Mick Ryan’s ditch, where our tinder-hearted landlord left her; if you could give me our little Kate, the light of our eyes and pride of our hearts, but who, for all that, has *starvation* written upon her grave; if you could bring me back father, mother, brothers, sisters—murdered by our landlords, by our agints, by our middlemen—if you could do all this, you might help me, sir, but not till then.’

“ ‘God help us,’ said I, ‘some of us are bad enough, my poor fellow; but what did you do to deserve all this?’

“ ‘Tried to live honestly,’ exclaimed the man with vehemence, and striking the table with his fist as he spoke; ‘but sorrow and trouble came upon me, and I had nowhere to turn to. The



rent I couldn't make up for the agint, so he considerably ventilated the cabin for us on a cold winter's morning by taking off the thatch, and left the corpse of my wife in the ditch I towld you of.'

" 'Did you appeal to—'

" 'Appeal!' interrupted the peasant, with a bitter laugh: 'to whom? To the landlord, or to the magistrate? You can hardly belong to these parts, or you wouldn't ask that question. Appeal! I might appeal to the God of Heaven, but the doors of all earthly courts would be closed against me.'

" 'He was right. Twenty years ago, and the life of the poor, down-trodden peasant or cotter was of far less importance in the eyes of the landlord than the life of his hound or his horse. I tell you, Mr. Dorricks, that I've seen the young strong man, high-souled, and full of generous impulses, degraded by injustice, cruelty, and oppression, below the level of the very brutes themselves. What wonder, then, that the stranger can point to our unhappy land and cry 'Aceldama?'—but to return.

“I pressed my friend, who was a powerful-looking young man of about six-and-twenty, to let me know more fully what reduced him to his present unhappy plight, and after a little painful hesitation, he thus began :—

“‘I needn’t tell your honour that the summer gone by was a bad one, and that the crops disappointed us all. The praitees were a complete failure, and the oats and the whate little better, and there wasn’t a man for miles round Portumna that could get a shilling to earn from high or low, rich or poor. I walked all the way to Limerick, hoping to get a little farm-work to do, leaving my poor wife and children (God rest yer sows, my darlings, in eternal glory!) with nothing but the roof of the cabin over their heads, and a black hearth to sit by. I got to Limerick, hungry and footsore, and not knowing a sowl in that strange place. I, however, went up to the Irishtown, near the market, where some one directed me, and stood there with about twenty others, who had spades and shovels on their shoulders ready to commence a job when-

ever they could get it. After loitering about for two or three hours, a gentleman came up to me, and said he wanted a stout, strong man for the summer work, and that he thought I'd answer him. I could not say much for myself, so I pulled out a few lines of character I had got from Mr. Dooley, of the Mill, and axed his honour to read it. He said it was no matther now, but that he'd put the paper in his pocket, and look over it some other time. I afterwards heerd that he couldn't read at all, and that he was no gentleman, but a gentleman's steward.

“ ‘Now about your wages, my man,’ said he, when he put my character in his pocket; ‘we give eightpence a day, and you’ve to boord yourself. Will that suit you?’

“ ‘I’d like a little more, sur,’ said I, as cheerfully as I could, ‘but beggars can’t be choosers.’

“ ‘Yer right there, anyhow,’ sez he; ‘beggars cannot be choosers, and maybe it’s a good job for themselves that they can’t; and they know it, too.’

“ ‘I might have had something to say agin

that, and all the little manhood that my landlord had not crushed out of me rose up at his cruel words; but I thought of poor Rose and the child, and how I left them, and smothered my feelings the best way I could, and walked on by his side, without saying another word. Well, sir, I trudged along with him to O'Brien's bridge, ten or twelve miles out of the town, on the Clare side, and on that very day he set me to work. At any other time, work would have been no trouble to me; but now I was separated for the first time from all I loved, and the bitter thought agin and agin crossed me whether 'twouldn't have been better to have suffered want, starvation, and death, rather than have left them. But there was no use of thinking that now, so I tried to be useful, and, so far as that was concerned, got on well enough. The masther gave me an 'outhouse' to sleep in, so that I'd no lodging to pay for; and be hard pinching of meself, I managed to send home two shillings every week by a pedlar, who made the rounds every Monday, and was back agin on Saturday nights. And

never came that pedlar without a message of love, or something in the way of an oaten cake or a piece of bacon, or whatever my poor wife could manage at the time. It worried me to think she was stinting herself to get me all these little comforts, and many's the sorrowful tears I shed over them. Let me make a long tale short, yer honor. I stayed out the summer and autumn, and then the masther towld me he had no more work to give, and that the sooner I got home the better. On a bitter November morning, and with the images of my wife and child lying like millstones at my heart, I tied everything I was owner of in a red pocket-handkercher, threw it across my shoulder, and set out on my weary way. I had just fourteen-pence in my pocket, and I was determined to bring home a shilling out of it, if I could, and this I tied up, and put out of sight. It was hard work enough, sur, to get on with the balance, but I did it, and got in sight of my own cabin on the third evening, and the shilling untouched in my pocket. The night was fallin' fast, yer honor, and so was the rain, as I

raised the latch of my own cabin door, and with a beating heart and a 'God save all here!' walked in as boldly as I could.

" 'There was no one in the room, no candle, no fire, no anything, not even the little spaniel that I raised from the time it was a week old—nothing, sur, nor anybody to welcome back the wanderer. I leant against the damp wall, and the hot tears blinded me as I leant. What was the matter? Were all dead and gone, or was I in a drame? No, not in a drame—would to God I was!—for in the next room, not two yards from where I stood, without a bit of food or fire lay my poor wife and child, dying of want. They had been bad a fortnight, but Rose begged of the pedlar, as if she was axin' her life, that he wouldn't tell me anything about it. 'Ted, avic,' sez she, 'don't tell him if you've a heart in your body—it 'ud kill him outright in that strange place, and then, God help him, what 'ud become of him?' And so she tried to bear up, and struggle against the hunger and sickness, till at last nature gave way, and she sank down

upon that bed from which she was never to rise agin.

“‘I won’t tell you about our meeting, sur,’ said the poor fellow, with sobs rising in his throat, and choking his utterance, ‘but I will tell you that in three days after she was a cold corpse by my side. Oh, yer honor, it was hours afore I could think she was gone, so I did nothing the live-long day but kiss her cowlid lips, and call her by her name, and listen in vain for that voice which always had music for me. On her breast lay our child, cold and stiff, and starved like its mother. Sur, I was *mad*. I called on God at one moment to lay me be their sides, and the next I raved, and blasphemmed, and swore vengeance against my landlord and his agint; and then I fainted off, for my grate grief and despair had taken all the strength out of me. How long I lay in that state I don’t know, but I was roused be the neighbours, who towld me that the agint and his men had been there and taken the bed from under the two poor corpses, and that Mick Slaterry and Billy Byrne had left them at the

back of a neighbour's ditch, having first taken the roof off the cabin to prevent me from going back to it. These men were two bailiffs of the agint, for the people were so mortially afeard of fever that they'd no more go near the bodies than they'd jump into a fire. Well, sur, the parish gave me two coffins, and the priest (God bless him!) a few feet of ground near a damp wall, in the far part of the chapel berrying ground, and there I laid my darlings on a cowld winter's night, without a living soul to help me. But there's One above who saw it all, and His judgment will not fail, though it tarry.'

"It was now nearly morning, so I slipped a sovereign into the poor wretch's hand, and dismissed him.

I went to bed, but not to sleep. The man's story made a deep impression upon me, and I passed the 'small hours' cursing the agents and middlemen, whom I now regarded in no very favourable light.

"I rose at nine, and was hastily dressing, when, on glancing at the outer room I saw a note



lying upon the table. Carelessly tearing it open, I read as follows :

"Mon Cher Ami,—Will you breakfast with me at ten! Champagne and all that sort of thing. Be sharp, as I have some hot work to do in this neighbourhood, and Lord Clanrickarde is dying with impatience to see me. I adopt no signature, as it might be dangerous; and the fate of France depends upon my safety. Receive the assurance of my distinguished —. You know the rest."

"‘A very extraordinary communication,’ I muttered, throwing it down. ‘He must be a queer fellow, that’s plain, to invite a perfect stranger to his battle when a most noble marquis is dying to make his acquaintance. Ah, well, perhaps that’s French manners after all; and as it would be a disgrace to the name of O’Leary to be less polite, I’ll go.’"

"It wanted but five minutes of ten o’clock as I put the finishing touch to my toilet, so I shuffled downstairs, along the corridor, in which a sharp-east wind was whistling a rather doleful tune—found his door, and, after a preliminary ‘hem’—knocked.

"‘*Entrez,*’ said a voice.

"I turned the handle of the door—pushed it—

walked boldly in, and found myself in the presence of the man upon whom the fate of France now hung.

“He was hardly five feet high, thin, spare, and sallow, with a little grey eye that had a good deal of light in it, a hooked nose, a large mouth, and a rather receding forehead. In age about fifty-five—perhaps more—but he leered at me in such a way as I entered that I thought he considered himself considerably younger. He was dressed oddly enough; white breeches and long shiny boots, a green, closely-fitting body coat, and white satin vest, a lace cravat, and a blue velvet smoking-cap. A diamond glittered in his scarf, and his small withered, veiny hands were ornamented with rings of some value, which he appeared to contemplate with unmixed satisfaction. He wore no sword (Bonaparte seldom did), but a small cane with a neat silk tassel was fastened to his side in a somewhat military fashion, and upon which one of the aforesaid hands rested. He was standing near the fireplace, a small, cross-looking cat at his feet, and his iron-

grey hair brushed upwards towards the ceiling as if it meditated an escape through the roof, but somehow hadn't the courage to attempt it.

"The table was laid for breakfast—a sumptuous one—tea, fish, game, poultry, tea, coffee, chocolate, but no champagne—not even a glass.

"Having roused himself from a fit of abstraction—real or feigned I could not discover—he walked slowly towards me, and with a polite bow and a smile, which showed not less than four-and-twenty (I'm afraid false) pearly teeth, assured me, in rather equivocal French, that I was heartily welcome to his humble *dejeuner*; that he felt highly honoured by my presence, and hoped that he would be able to render the next half-hour agreeable to me, and that that thirty minutes—for he regretted that he was limited to eighteen hundred seconds—would suffice to create such a friendship between us as would end only with life.

"All this was pleasant enough, and the little man would have risen in my estimation had his French been a trifle more perfect. As it was, I

made my acknowledgments in plain English, and if he didn't understand it—the loss was his.

“ ‘Sir,’ said I—(‘Monsieur’ would have been more correct, but no matter)—‘Sir, illustrious sir,’ blushing at having accidentally omitted the adjective, ‘you overpower me. To have the honour of standing in the presence of, much less of breakfasting with, one of such world-wide fame, is indeed a stroke of fortune little dreamt of to me—to see you—to hear you—to talk to you—to look into those eagle eyes, once the terror of your enemies—to gaze upon that brow, often encircled by the victor’s crown—to press that hand—I—oh! sir—General—might I (dropping my voice to a whisper) add sire!—pardon me, if in the fulness of my heart I let fall upon this splendid but highly-coloured carpet a tear of humble joy and gratitude.’

“ He smiled again and wiped his eyes! The General wiped his eyes! passed his fingers through his hair, and tried to look collected. A failure, I must say.

“ ‘Yes,’ continued I, rising with my subject,

'this is, indeed, the happiest moment of my life, the turning point of my existence. Unborn O'Learys will hear it and rejoice. Unborn O'Learys will hear it and wonder. England shall know it—France shall know it—the world shall know it!'

"For the third time he smiled, and tried to look collected.

"'Yes, noble, but highly-sensitive individual, all the honours of earth are as nothing compared to this—all the patronage—the emoluments—the dignities that this world can bestow sink into insignificance when——"

"'Eh, *bien!*' said the hero, speaking with considerable condescension, and interrupting me with a wave of his hand; 'I am pleased with you. You are a young man of promise. I patronise you.'

"How bad was the French, yet how sweet were the words! I could have grovelled on the earth and kissed his feet. I have now some faint recollection of having made a movement to that effect, and being prevented by our Hannibal.

“ ‘Men have risen, my gigantic young friend,’ he continued, drawing himself up to his full height, ‘risen to eminence through me—generals—marshals—kings. Think of that: be faithful, and you, too, shall rise.’

“He has a brogue or a cold, thought I—I don’t know which.

“ ‘And now let us be seated,’ said he, briskly; ‘pour out a cup of tea and hand it to me. Thanks! No fish—I never eat it. A wing of that pheasant. Pshaw!—tough. Grouse, good! More sugar, please; that’ll do. Ah! you carve pretty well—indeed, I shall drop one of the adverbs, and say for your encouragement, you carve well, but *mon Dieu, mon ami*, what a carver Ney was! I made him.’

“Whether he had made him a carver or a marshal I had yet to learn.

“ ‘Yes,’ he added, with emphasis, and looking at me significantly; ‘yes, I made him a marshal—half-an-hour did it.’

“I was to spend half-an-hour with him, and

already I grasped (in imagination) the baton with a determined hand.

“‘I never drink coffee, O’Leary,’ he resumed, rejecting a cup of that beverage, ‘no more does Murat. It is stimulating, and I need no stimulents. Probably you do. Try some.’

“I modestly declined. Coffee was my abhorrence. So I said.

“‘Can you fight?’ he asked, suddenly. I looked up from my plate, and, to my horror, saw him brandishing a large carving-knife, and grinning most ferociously at me. ‘Soldiers should fight—I always fight—come on!’

“In self-defence, I seized a boot-jack, which lay near me, and with it parried a few of the thrusts of my now highly-excited friend.

“‘Come on!’ he shouted, as he dealt blow after blow at his wooden adversary; ‘come on! lay down that boot-jack, and fight, will you? Ah, coward! It was not with such as you I carried St. Jean! Where are the swords, and arms, and hearts of Austerlitz?—where the cavalry of

Marengo—the old guard of Waterloo? Gone, all gone! and I, once the pride and stay of France, and the terror of the world, am now a poor, forsaken, withered old man, without home or friends, kith or kin.'

"'Kith or kin!' D—n me! thought I (I beg the ladies' pardon), the fellow's an Irishman, after all; and he's ashamed of his country, too! —'pon my conscience, I'm half a mind to make him ashamed of himself.

"'They've all deserted me,' he continued; 'and left me to pine and die upon that lonely sea-girt isle—me, who so often led them on to victory, and to—death—God forgive them for it!'

"The poor little man looked so unhappy, when he said this, that my anger entirely vanished.

"'My dear sir,' I said, at length; 'will you oblige me by sitting down and resuming your breakfast. It's far better than trying to kill or maim a fellow-creature. There, now, let me help you to some tongue—that's the sort of thing to try a carving-knife on.'

And he did sit down, and took some tongue,



and followed up with tea and toast, and hoped he hadn't frightened me very much; and he rubbed his hair all over, and wiped the perspiration from his face, and pulled up his shirt-collar, and pulled down his wrist-bands, and looked as patronising and as condescending as before.

" 'It's a way I have, O'Leary—troublesome, but harmless. Forget it—shake hands.'

"His hand was moist, and his eye, I thought, a little wild. I had my suspicions, but said nothing.

" 'Now we're friends,' he said, glancing at me somewhat uneasily—'I'm delighted that we're friends—aint you?'

"I said 'Certainly;,' nothing could please me better.' I quietly removed the carving-knife to the far end of the table, however; and that without relinquishing my hold of the boot-jack.

" 'The marquis will be expecting me,' said he, after a pause; 'and my carriage has not yet arrived. 'Tis all my servant's fault! Drunken vagabonds, O'Leary, idle and lazy—careless as to consequences—indifferent as to results—hang-dog

ruffians, without more conscience than a nutmeg, or more soul than a grater,—wretches that I hate and fear, and—Mon Dieu !' he exclaimed suddenly, 'what's that I hear ?'

" 'The sound of carriage-wheels, General—your carriage, no doubt.'

"In an instant he was on his legs and at the window, pale and trembling, big, bead-like drops standing on his forehead ; his eyes staring, his frame quivering, and the whole man transformed into a little, crouching, frightened animal.

"I, too, sprang to the window, but could see nothing, though the sounds were distinct enough, and I could hear the voices of the postilions, urging their horses onward.

" 'You are ill,' said I, turning to my friend,— 'sit down, collect your scattered thoughts, drop your French foolery, and tell me who you are.'

" 'Save me,' he cried, sinking piteously at my feet, and looking imploringly into my face— 'save me, and I'll reward you. Untold wealth shall be yours, if you take me to the nearest seaport, put me on board a gallant barque, and land me safe at

Calais. You know not my power—you know not my influence. You know not what I can do for you—you know not what I will do for you. Only get me out of this cursed country, and you shall be a marshal in a week.'

"'But the marquis,' I suggested, 'he'll be waiting for you—you surely could not think of disappointing him.'

"'Oh, bother the marquis!'

"'What, after all this——?'

"'Gammon! The marquis can't keep my head upon my shoulders—it feels shaky already—I'm off.'

"'Not yet,' said a deep voice behind me. I turned and saw two rough-looking men, with brown top-boots, and slouched hats, quietly contemplating the kneeling suppliant. 'Not yet, Mr. Murphy; your head will be far safer with us. We'll take good care of it—we're paid for it.'

"The little creature shrieked and clung to me.

"'Keep them off! they'll kill me; they've tried it before, they'll *do* it now; keep them off—keep them off!'

" 'Who are you?' I asked the nearest man, and what do you want here?'

" 'Faith, we wanted himself,' was the answer, 'and we've got him now. Be the piper, but it's yerself that's the airy little blade, Mither Murphy, dressed up in that fashion, skipping through the country and giving daicent, honest men like us, that ought to be at home with the wife and children, all this throuble. Arrah, you ought to be ashamed of yourself.'

" 'Save me, O'Leary—save me! Knock them down—you're just the man to do it; blow their brains out, kick them out—you don't fear them—I do!'

" 'Fie, my lord!—a soldier and afeard!'

" 'I am not a soldier, I never was; I'm only plain Tom Murphy and—'

" 'An escaped lunatic,' added the second man. He's been in the Bandon Asylum, sir, for the last nine years, and as he appeared to be improving a little the governor allowed him to go about as much as he liked, and, to plaize him, dressed him up as the monkey you now see him.

but the unfortunate could not be betrayed. He betrayed confidence and cut his stick when he got an opportunity. We've been on his track for the last two days, but he travelled so fast we couldn't come up with him till now, and as he's likely to be troublesome on the way, the sooner we start the better. Jim, carry the little man downstairs.'

"In vain the poor wretch clung to me; in vain he implored mercy from his captors; in vain he offered bribes of sufficient magnitude to corrupt the heart of the most virtuous keeper that ever shook a straight-jacket at a patient. Go he must, and go he did. Struggling in the arms of a huge, red-bearded rascal, he was carried down and placed tenderly in the carriage; a travelling cap was stuck upon his head, the carriage-step put up, the blinds put down, the postillions cracked their whips, and the two men coolly lighted their pipes.

" 'Farewell, General,' said I, grasping the old fellow's hand. 'Give my best respects to Ney and Murat, when you see them next.

" 'Ah,' said he, feebly returning the pressure,

and scratching his head a moment afterwards, 'I suppose there's something wrong here, O'Leary; but never mind, we'll do them yet. What do you think?'

" 'Do them? Of course,' I replied.

" 'Of course! I'm no common man, and these fellows know it. *Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!* that I, who have destroyed kingdoms, imprisoned the Pope, nearly licked England, and—oh, confound it, I'm going wrong again! Give me some snuff, one of you."

"A paper, containing rather less than a quarter-of-a-pound was produced, from which the little man filled his pockets, like the Emperor, and the last thing I saw him do, as they dashed from the door, was to fold his arms majestically upon his narrow chest, wink knowingly at me, and then smile at the keeper most complacently.

'He's all right, sir,' shouted my red friend from within—'Boney's himself again.'"

As my uncle concluded the clock struck ten, and soon afterwards we took our leave.

Dorrick's way and mine lay for some distance.

together, and during our short walk the conversation turned upon Mr. Roberts and his family.

"They are very good people, these Roberts's," said Mr. Dorricks, in a low, gentle tone, "and I highly esteem and prize them. Mrs. Roberts is, if I may be forgiven for saying so, a little too lively, but her character and conduct are most unexceptionable, and her kind-heartedness and liberality quite proverbial. Perhaps in that very kind-heartedness and liberality lie her greatest danger, for they cause her to mix freely with what the world calls 'society,' and constant intercourse with gay, fashionable people often—too often, alas!—wears out of the heart much of that spirituality which it should be the Christian's privilege to cherish and enjoy."

"And Miss Roberts, Mr. Dorricks?"

"A sweet girl, and pure as the white-blown rose of early summer. I have not known her long, as you probably are aware, but I nevertheless do not hesitate to pronounce her a genuine Christian—a true 'Israelite in whom there is no guile.' I have studied her, Master Allen—have observed her

devotedness, her humility, her child-like simplicity, her—" he paused and laid his hand solemnly upon my arm. "Young man, when heaven and earth shall have passed away, where, think you, will that girl be found?"

"In heaven itself," I answered; "before the Great White Throne—where else?"

"Where else, indeed," he half questioned, in a low deep voice; "where else! But here we part. Farewell, my young friend! Our time passed this evening pleasantly, and I trust not altogether unprofitably; but the fewer of such evenings for you and me and all of us the better. Let us be in the world, but not of it, and to this end we must exercise a constant self-denial, and appoint a stern watchman over our every thought and action. Good-bye! I shall see you to-morrow or next day, please God."

"To-morrow or next day," I repeated, looking after him; "who knows but ere that time heaven and earth *shall* have passed away, and Eveleen indeed be found before the Great White Throne."



## CHAPTER VI.

IN WHICH, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE READER  
IS TREATED TO A PASSAGE IN THE SECRET  
HISTORY OF MR. SIMON JACKSON.

I AM satisfied that in these recollections I depart from the course usually adopted by storytellers, and romancists—namely, dwelling at great length upon the trials and vicissitudes of boyhood, and conjuring up at every step the ghosts of stern fathers, flinty-hearted guardians, or cruel task-masters in the shape of employers sent to afflict and torment us. This may be a very good plan, but as I happen to think my own a better one, I shall have nothing to do with it. The reader must not, therefore, expect to hear much about cruelty or injustice while at Mr. Roberts's, for only on one or two occasions was I the victim of either.

That gentleman (Mr. Roberts) in due time began to notice me, and I was invited occasionally to his house in the Old Kent Road, where

I received every kindness and attention at the hands of Mr. Roberts and Eveleen. Mr. Dorricks, on such occasions, seemed glad to see me, and spoke encouragingly and kindly. He was rather distant and reserved, it is true, but such was his manner.

My invitations, and the encouragement given me by my employer and his family, caused me to be envied by some of the boys and hated by others; but as fortune smiled so sweetly upon me, I could afford to be magnanimous, and so pitied and forgave them.

"George," said Jackson to me, one night, as we sought our couch, "George, do you think it will be a match?"

"Will what be a match?" I asked.

"Oh, you know," he replied; "of course you know—why not!"

"Perhaps I do, but you must speak a little plainer."

"Why, between Miss Eveleen—God bless her! —[there I said, 'Amen'] and Mr. Dorricks."

"I don't know," I responded, greatly nettled.

Latterly this subject had become distasteful to me.

"Dear me, I should have thought you did," said Master Jackson, taking off his shoes as he spoke; "everybody believes you know all about it."

"Everybody's wrong, then—yourself into the bargain."

"Now, don't be cross—there's a good lad!" fawned my huge bedfellow. "It's only natural to suppose that you should know a good deal about what's going on in the Old Kent Road, as you spend two evenings every week there, and I'm sure you don't keep your eyes and ears shut all that time,—I know *I* wouldn't, and that's why everybody says that if there has been any talk of a marriage you must have heard it. Now, I'm far from asking or wishing you to betray confidence; still, as many things must have come under your notice regarding which you have not been pledged to silence by any one, I do not see why, without breach of faith (which I wouldn't have you guilty of for the world), you shouldn't tell your old

friend and bedfellow, Simon Jackson ; the more especially as that same Simon Jackson, in his own poor way, takes the deepest interest in Miss Eveleen, and would die any day to bring about her happiness."

"If you mean to ask if Miss Eveleen is likely to marry Mr. Dorricks," I answered, "I can only tell you what you already know, which is, that they are nearly always together, and seem to like each other's society very much, and that Mr. Roberts never appears so happy as when he sees them walking up and down the garden, arm-in-arm, or turning over the leaves of the music, at the piano."

"Hem!" said Mr. Jackson, "that's a good sign. And yet, George, this Mr. Dorricks is an entire stranger—nobody knows anything about him except Mr. Roberts, and I believe he never saw him until a month or so before you perched yourself upon that stool in old Snagg's office. Mr. Satchard, who knows, or pretends to know everything, says that Roberts in the early part of his life was under great obligations to Dorricks

senior, and that he is now repaying them by his attentions to his son.

"Has Mr. Dorricks ever spoken to you?"

"Two or three times. What a winning manner he has!"

"And what a smile, too! He almost persuades me to be his friend."

"And like the man of old, he almost persuades me to be a Christian." "Happy Dorricks!"—and I sighed.

"Well, I don't know about his being so very happy—look into his eyes, next time you see him, and then call him 'Happy Dorricks,' if you will.

"How old is Miss Eveleen?" I asked, anxious to change the subject.

"I ought to know that." And Mr. Jackson got up, took down from the shelf an old, well-thumbed Bible, and drew it close to the light. "Yes, here it is," he continued: "she will be seventeen the third of next month, at eleven o'clock in the forenoon."

"Indeed! You are very particular as to the day and hour."

"So I ought," he replied, with a low, chuckling laugh, "for I was born on that day and at that hour."

"You!"

"Yes, me! Now, oughtn't I to have been good-looking!"

"Born on the same day and at the same hour!" I repeated, incredulously.

"Aye, and at the same moment also. Come, I'll tell you all about it. My mother was cook in this house about eighteen years ago, and my father warehouse porter. They were anxious to marry, and Mr. Roberts, wonderful to relate, did not object. He married two or three days afterwards himself, much to everybody's amazement (for he was never looked upon as a marrying man), and the birth of Miss Eveleen in the best bedroom, and myself in the back kitchen, were announced at one and the same time."

"How funny!" said I, laughing. "I never heard so much of your history before."

"I dare say not. Nobody cares to hear *my* history. Will you have the remainder?"

"I should like it, Simon."

"Thank you! You're one in a thousand. I was born, as I have already said, on the same day as Miss Eveleen, and that little accident did me no harm. When an infant I was carried up to the parlour or drawing-room, and petted and caressed by the late Mrs. Roberts, just as much as Miss Roberts herself, and when a boy, and old enough to learn anything, was sent to school by her, where, after six years of hard, patient toil, I became a tolerable proficient in the English, Latin, and Greek tongues, and understood (what few lads of my age then understood), that 'similar triangles are to one another in the duplicate ratio of their homologous sides.' In a word, then, I was something of a scholar, and I may well be forgiven if I were a little proud of it. You wonder, no doubt, that the boy Jackson excited so much attention and gained so much knowledge, especially as he was the son of a porter and a marvellously ugly one into the bargain; but so it was, and I went on and prospered until my father broke his neck down the cellar-steps, and my mother ran off with a journeyman

baker. Had Mrs. Roberts eloped with a middle-aged tinker, and Mr. Roberts brained himself with that gentleman's soldering-iron, the coincidence would have been far more remarkable. As it so fell out I was pitied and cried over, and I enjoyed it amazingly. Father and mother hated me through long, long years, and I felt glad that they were gone. No more blows from my cruel, drunken father. No more harsh words from my equally cruel, though more sober mother. The one gone to the grave—the other to some distant part of the earth, and it seemed to me as if my cup of happiness were full, full to overflowing. But ere I could taste that cup it was dashed from my lips. Mrs. Roberts died, and I was forgotten. Why, I do not know. Perhaps because Mr. Roberts married twelve months after her death, and naturally enough, had not time to think of me; perhaps, because Miss Roberts was now a hundred miles off at school, and could not talk to me, and of me, as she used; perhaps, because I grew uglier and uglier day after day, and everybody loathed, despised, and shunned me.



Certain it was, at all events, that I was fast sinking into oblivion, and that unless the 'chief butler's' memory was jogged poor Joseph would soon be forgotten altogether. By a good deal of skilful manoeuvring, I succeeded in attracting his attention, and the result was that the post of errand-boy was given to me, and in six months after I was holding a position similar to that you at present occupy, and which I hope you will adorn. And now, you know my story, so far as I know it myself, and I trust you will sleep none the worse to-night for hearing it."

But I did sleep all the worse, notwithstanding; for until morning's light Jackson and his ugly face, Mrs. J., and the absconding baker, together with every other imaginable kind of nonsense, mingled with my dreams.

From that memorable night I looked upon Jackson as a fool, or something akin to it. He could not be otherwise than a fool, who so coolly talked of the frightful accident which hurried away his father, and the incident in his mother's life which placed so foul a blot upon his own name

and fame. I confess I now disliked sleeping with him more than ever, and I told him so ; but the wretch only grinned and made such hideous faces that, in disgust as well as in despair, I fairly gave up for ever this unpleasant subject.

About this period of my life, I became sensible of the fact that Mr. Jones married a greengrocer's daughter named Rowley, and then took a small shop in the neighbourhood of Chelsea, where he may still be seen. Mr. Rogers, who was a remarkably kind-hearted man, lent him some money for the purpose, and from what I know of Mr. Jones's character, I am satisfied he never returned it. Poor Mr. Rogers is now some years dead ; freed alike from the curses and invectives of his wife, and the threats of his oyster-loving son, and nothing at all the worse for Mr. Jones's worldly-mindedness and dishonesty.

I love to think of that ill-used old man ; of his patience, his gentleness, his unswerving integrity, his devotion to his employer and his interests, his humiliating sense of shame at the unmerited, and sometimes brutal conduct of his wife and child ;

but above all, of his Christian character, and his holy life and conversation before God and man. Who knows what good effect this much-abused, much-enduring Mr. Rogers may have wrought, even upon me. In what way he may have taught me to look from out myself as containing nothing that is good, and look to that God who is goodness itself? Who can tell how many "crowns of rejoicing" he may yet enjoy?

I looked at his grave but a week ago, and my young heart and my young thoughts came back again; and I remembered when he was at Mr. Roberts's, and how we all loved him. And, oh, how humbled did I return home! and how, in the loneliness of my own closet, did I pour out my soul before God, and pray, that I might indeed 'die the death of the righteous, and my last end be like his!'

Eveleen Roberts—good, quiet, warm-hearted Eveleen, often visited Mr. and Mrs. O'Leary; and I saw her occasionally at Mr. Loader's, where she was, as she deserved to be, a general favourite. She was at all times very kind and encouraging,

and knew (at least, I hoped she did) that, like Simon Jackson, I would die any day to save her a single pang. It did not exactly occur to me how this proceeding (I mean, the dying) could possibly benefit her; but now that I have grown older and wiser, I look back with a smile upon all these mock heroics, in which boys, and, I regret to say, sometimes men, occasionally indulge.

And yet, I fancied I loved Fanny Loader also, or that, at any rate, she held the second place in my heart, and I was often at a loss to understand this apparent paradox. Perhaps the reader will be able to do so, when I tell him that I was then exactly seventeen.

Mr. Roberts was to me a puzzle. I could not make him out. He was neither harsh nor gentle; seldom scolded, and never got into a passion. If anything went wrong, he had it rectified in the quietest manner, and with the fewest possible words; and yet, it seemed to me as if the erring party were never forgiven, and that, sooner or later, he was made to feel the full weight of his

displeasure. Let me illustrate this.—A boy, named Finch, was sent by him one day on a trifling errand. The distance was not great, probably a mile, but it was fully three hours before he returned. Mr. Roberts had an important appointment somewhere in the City, and the time was fast approaching, but there he sat, calm and unmoved, no sound of impatience escaping his lips or cloud of anger darkening his brow. We all saw this, and felt that Finch's fate trembled in the balance. At length he came, pale and breathless and awe-stricken. And this was his excuse—he had met an only brother in the street, near the Bank, who had come up all the way from Yorkshire to see him; that they turned into a coffee-house, in Cheapside, to talk over old times, and about old friends, and that, thus talking, the time slipped by; that he was very, very sorry for all this, and hoped Mr. Roberts would forgive him, as his brother would leave home for India in a few days, and he was not likely to see him again on earth.

The boy uttered this with honest truth in the face, and tears in his eyes.

"I do not like loiterers," was Mr. Roberts's cold reply, as he took up his hat and went out.

That boy was not forgotten. Four months afterwards, he misdirected a parcel, which was returned as "Not known." "It is all over with me, Allen," said the poor fellow, when the fatal parcel met his eye; "its all over with me—he *never FORGETS OR FORGIVES.*"

And so it was. He was dismissed on the instant, and I never saw him more. I understood, however, that he went to sea, and perished in a rough gale off the coast of Guinea. Truly, Mr. Roberts was not guiltless in this matter.

Mr. Roberts acted upon, what he called, principle; and that principle, or part of it, was never to forgive an insult, real or fancied.

Ah! there are many Mr. Roberts's in the world—we see them in every street—we meet them at every turn—sometimes in our own pews—in our own homes—at our own hearths. Men and women who have framed themselves a code of laws, by which they judge mankind. And from this judgment there is no appeal. Such men and

women go upon their knees, and pray to be forgiven even as they forgive, and yet rise from those knees with "envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness" filling their very hearts. Alas, for such! How will they stand in that great and terrible day, when the judgment that they have meted shall be measured to them again? Good for them that they had never been born; or, being born, that a mill-stone had been hanged about their necks, and they drowned in the depths of the sea.

---

## CHAPTER VII.

## I GET ON.

It is now the spring of 1838, and poor Stephen is suffering from gout. The winter had been a severe one, and the snow still upon the ground, and I trudge through it to Mr. O'Leary's bedside, and, as the night advances, from Mr. O'Leary's bedside to Cannon-street, City. He can no longer indulge in his favourite business, and the whiskey remains in the decanter, untouched and untasted.

"This is horrible, my boy," said he to me, one night (it was the twenty-eighth of March, I remember well), "lying here, racked with pain in every joint, fearing the night, yet dreading the morning. It cannot last much longer—I am fairly worn out."

"Do not talk like that, my own dear, brave



uncle," I urged ; "you will get better as the season advances ; only wait till we have the bright, warm sun-light back again, and then you will smile once more."

"I don't think so, George. In the summer I shall have it nearer the stomach, and then good-bye to life. How do you get on at the Roberts's?"

"Stephen's rapid transition from one subject to another by no means surprised me, so I replied, "Oh, very well indeed, uncle—I feel quite happy."

"I am glad of it," returned the invalid, "very glad. I knew you would uphold the honour of the family, wherever you went. I have never been disappointed in you—I am satisfied I never shall."

"I felt flattered by this, and told him so. He smiled feebly, and continued—"If I *should* recover, George, which I very much doubt, I shall become a better and a wiser man. No more concerts, theatres, and billiard-rooms, late hours and hot suppers.—No, no ; everything quiet and orderly, and sober and steady. Take my word for it, lad, that's it."

I knew O'Leary. When ill, no man *meant* better than himself. "Have you heard anything of Mr. Marston lately?" I asked, after a pause.

"No, and I fancy that he has long since passed the 'bourne.' He was a strange fellow, I believe, and all the more likely to come to an untimely end."

"I think he is alive, sir," said I, seriously.

"Indeed! Why do you think that?" he asked in some surprise.

"I can hardly tell you, but there is a conviction on my mind, amounting almost to a certainty that we shall meet again, and under better and happier circumstances. Strange that I feel, and am persuaded, that he will one day save me from a terrible fate."

"Well, well," returned O'Leary, "it may be as you say, and that he *is* alive and well. I'm sure I don't want to kill the poor devil. But, dropping him, what a lovely girl Miss Roberts is; how amiable, how graceful, how—in short, George, I should like you to marry her."

"*Me*, uncle! I fear you are dreaming."

"Not at all. I have been thinking of it for a long time, and it does not occur to me at present that you can do better; so the sooner you propose——"

"I have no desire," said I, laughing, "to curvet like a dog in a blanket, and therefore must not think of such a thing. Miss Roberts will marry a rich man some day, and from my heart I pray he may be a good one, and so we will leave the subject."

"On the contrary, my boy, let us stick to it. I tell you, again, I believe the girl loves you. Your aunt says she blushes when your name is mentioned, and that, by all accounts, is a good sign; what you want most is courage, and courage is an essential that, I am proud to say, O'Leary was never deficient in. And yet my uncle, Mark O'Leary, who left an arm and a leg at Badajoz, used to say that he'd rather any day in the year, face a whole park of artillery, or a *cheveaux de frise* of good English bayonets, than propose for any woman whose affection he was not already sure of."

"And yet you would have me propose for Eveleen! Come, uncle, are you not a little inconsistent?"

"By no means, George; remember, I do not commend my worthy relative for his moral cowardice (for such it is, neither more nor less) on this particular point. Far from it. Still, I do not advise you to act rashly—far from that either, but rather to endeavour quietly to ascertain the young lady's sentiments, which I have no doubt you will find to be altogether in your favour."

I could not help smiling at O'Leary and his ideas. In common with the major's widow, he entertained the conviction that, for a youth of seventeen, I was perfectly irresistible in every possible sense of the word.

But though I laughed at his words, they, nevertheless, sank deep into my heart, and there they remained for I know not how long. In the still of my own chamber I looked into that heart, and there enshrined I saw, for the first time, the image of Eveleen, the beautiful and good. Often have I recalled that night in after years, in moments of

doubt and despair—in the dark hour of shame, and sorrow, and anguish, and, to all appearance, death ; and the thought of it has brought the balm of consolation to my wounded soul. God bless you, Eveleen Roberts ! rich in every virtue, with your true woman's heart, and gentle, loving nature. God bless you, for the good you have done—God bless you for the good you have yet to do.

If I do not in these pages allude more frequently to my stepfather, it is because the act is always attended with a certain amount of pain ; and my mind recurs again and again to this man, so singularly gifted by nature, recklessly casting beneath his feet talents of no mean order, and giving himself up, deliberately and determinedly, to a course of life that few could contemplate without a shudder. I took every precaution to avoid encountering him (for I felt certain that he was alive and in London,) and as I was rarely in the street during daylight, our chances of meeting were but small. We did meet, once, however, when, after a nod of recognition, he darted down a dirty lane away, as if to prevent all attempts at

conversation. I did not think he actually hated me—I am now sure he did not; but I am satisfied that my presence was always a reproach to him, and that it was the means of sending him back to the past with all its dreary associations. I rather think that he feared more than disliked me, and dreaded my carrying out, one day, the threat which I uttered in that lonely street, under that wintry sky. But I had learned to school my heart, and take to it better, purer, holier thoughts. I forgave him all his cruelty to my mother (never premeditated, as I believed,) and his injustice to myself—fully, frankly, and entirely forgave him. I told him so in after years, when my own heart was crushed within me, and the light of life seemed to have departed for ever.

Reckless, desperate, abandoned as he was, I hoped, almost against hope, that he was not wholly lost, but, that, like sheep who have long fed upon barren pastures, he might return to the fold.

I was at Mr. Roberts's about two years, when the following short scene was one day enacted by that gentleman and myself.

"George Allen, forward!" cried a lad of thirteen, newly entered, but whose name I now forget; "the gov'ner wants you," he added, in answer to my look of inquiry.

And forward went George Allen, not knowing what was about to happen.

"George," said Mr. Roberts, in a very quiet, business-like tone, when I stood before him; "George, shut that door, and listen to me."

I did the one, and prepared to do the other.

"You have now been with me two years, and your conduct during that period has been such as to give entire satisfaction to those best capable of judging of it. Mr. Snaggs (poor old Snaggs, after all) and Mr. Loader say so, and I am bound to believe them. It is a pleasing thing to see a young man devoting himself so entirely to his employer's interests, and, sooner or later, the reward will come. You are not a person of great talents, but you possess uncommon industry, and this I infinitely prefer. Every day you become more and more useful, and it is my duty to recognise that fact in some substantial way.

Acting upon that sense of duty, therefore, I have given orders that your salary be raised twenty pounds a year from this date, and trust that the increase, trifling though it be, will prove that I am not altogether insensible to your merits."

I bowed my thanks, and he continued—

"I am sorry to learn from my daughter that you lost your sister some time ago; had I heard it sooner, I should sooner have expressed my sympathy. It is painful to lose a relative or friend, but such losses are sent very often for our good. Afflictions of this kind usually purify the heart, and elevate it more completely from earth to heaven. May it be so in your case! Now leave me, and send here Mr. Snaggs."

That very evening Mr. O'Leary informed Eveleen of my good fortune. She was delighted, and said she "was sure that papa would still further encourage Mr. Allen," (she had ceased to call me George) and this made me happier than everything else put together.

I have often since thought it strange how short was my sleep that night, and how with that sleep



came loved forms bending over my pillow, and soft voices murmuring in my ear; and how Eveleen herself, clad in a white robe, but with her face veiled, and a moss-rose in her hair, knelt beside me, and, taking my hand in hers, vowed, in the presence of Mr. O'Leary and my aunt, to be mine for ever. And when I awoke, all was gone, and I saw nothing but Jackson sitting upon a stool by the bed (it was midnight and a candle was burning), with his inexpressive face and dull green eyes, turned wondering upon mine.

I asked him, with a shudder at the cold reality that now presented itself, what was the matter, and why he was up and dressed at such an hour.

He told me that he had been in an agony with a toothache or a toe ache (I now forget which) and that, being unable to get any rest, he had risen and dressed himself, determined to wait, with as much patience as he could command, the coming day.

"Did I mutter anything in my sleep," I asked.

"Oh, dear, no," he replied; "or if you did, I was too much engaged with my own thoughts to think about it."

"You're sure?"

"Sure! why, of course, I'm sure; why shouldn't I?"

"I'm glad of it?"

"I know you are, and its honest of you to say so. I wish there were a few more honest fellows in the world, and 'twould get on a great deal better. Do you know I'm beginning already to tire of life, and to think seriously of quitting it, and I wouldn't mind doing it this blessed night, if I thought there was rest for me somewhere.

"What do you mean?" I asked in some alarm.  
"Just what I say. If I were certain that there was no God, nor devil, nor heaven, nor hell, I'd make a vacancy in Roberts's for some shoeless, hungry hog by to-morrow morning."

"Tired of the world, Jackson! and at eighteen!" I exclaimed in amazement, as I glanced at his white face, rendered still more white and ghastly by the fitful flickering of the candle.

"Yes, quite tired of it," he replied, in a wearied, dejected tone; for I hate everything and everyone in it."

"It is lately that you have come to think and talk so. My poor fellow, you must be ill."

"Why, yes," said he after a few moments pause. "Why, yes, so I think I am, and if I had a little medicine, I'm sure 'twould do me good—'twould ease me here." And he pressed his hand tightly on his heart.

"Shall I get up and go for a doctor, Simon? Dr. Morse lives on Ludgate Hill, you know."

"And he could help that same hill just as much as he could help me; so, you see, there would be no use in sending for him. No, George; when the time comes I must be my own physician."

I felt a little uneasy, for his manner was wild, and I had serious thoughts of summoning assistance; but he seemed to read me at a glance, for he deliberately stood up (for hitherto he had been sitting doubled up upon the stool until his chest rested upon his arms), walked to the door, locked it, and put the key in his pocket.

"There, now," he said, with a low laugh, "there'll be no doctor to-night, unless he comes through the keyhole, and that's not very likely, I

should think. Don't look frightened, man; I don't mean to harm you—by the living ——, I don't."

"Never had I heard Jackson swear before. No wonder, then, that I was appalled at the oath, and the frightful vehemence with which it was uttered.

"I don't fear you, Jackson," I replied, "but I fear *for* you."

"And why should you fear for *me*?" he asked, abruptly.

"You have yourself supplied the answer to that question—you swear! What have you not, then, to fear?"

"Oh, aye!—fire and brimstone, and the bottomless pit, and all that sort of thing. Well, I believe you're right, and I daresay that I shall have *my* portion, as well as many others, 'in the lake that burneth.'"

"The subject is an awful one, Simon; so, in God's name, don't trifle with it."

"I won't," then, since you wish it; and I'm sorry for what I said just now. But, George, I've lain awake this whole week, night after night, thinking

and thinking and thinking, until my brain has well-nigh turned, and my heart has well-nigh burst, so that you must not be surprised if I sometimes say and do odd things."

"But what is the cause of all this?"

"Will you laugh at me if I tell you?"

"Laugh at you! No."

"Well, then, I will be frank and honest, just as you were a while ago. I was born, you know, at the same time as Eveleen Roberts, and it is but natural that I should feel a deep interest in everything that concerns her. God knows I *do* feel an interest in her—an interest *too deep*, too strong, too abiding for my own peace of mind; but that is not what I was going to say. To come, then, to the point at once. Eveleen looks ill—pale, thin, and exhausted, has lost her appetite, I understand, and with it her spirits—coughs in the mornings, and sweats at night; is feverish, restless, nervous, fond of solitude, silence, and tears, makes a confidant of no one, but suffers to herself. All this I learnt from her own maid, for by this time you must know that I am a privileged person in the family

—a sort of fool or simpleton, such as the Irish gentleman loves to attach to his household. Well, this grieves me, *how much* you shall never know ; but that is not all. I fear that her affections are being tampered with, and that she will be forced some day, and that day not far distant either, to give her hand to one she respects, but cannot love. Sooner than that should happen, I tell you, George, that I would rather see her lying beside her mother, with the full assurance and conviction that she slept the sleep of the just.”

I stared in mute astonishment at Jackson, and he went on :—

“Mr. Roberts is a good man, but he knows nothing of the human heart. He means well by his daughter, yet he will sacrifice her happiness, or I mistake him greatly, to the blind devotion to an idea. All this is dreadful to me to see and feel and know, and at times I think I shall go mad—that is if I be not, as many have often hinted, mad already. Madness is common in our family, and it is quite possible that I have got more than my share of it. However, I have wisdom enough to

see some things that people around me seem blind to.

He stared me steadily in the face as he spoke these last words ; then, extinguishing the candle, undressed himself without another word, and slipped quietly into bed.

For the remainder of that night and morning, no sleep visited my eyelids. I lay awake, pondering upon Jackson's mysterious conduct, and his equally mysterious words, and more than once I caught myself exclaiming almost aloud—"There is danger to Eveleen's life, there is danger to Eveleen's happiness. Would to God that Mr. Roberts would send her abroad !"

---

## CHAPTER VIII.

## I AM IN DESPAIR.

MR. ROBERTS did *not* send Eveleen abroad, but he took a small neat house for her and Mrs Roberts in the immediate neighbourhood of Richmond, and thither he himself repaired three evenings in each week. *I* was now miserable. *I* could no longer hear her sweet voice, or see her sweet face, and *I* felt as if the sun were suddenly withdrawn from the firmament, and *I* left in utter darkness. How gloomy, sullen, and morose did *I* now become to all around me! How little did *I* heed the reproofs of Mr. Snaggs, who seemed to think that latterly *I* had taken unwarrantable liberties with the facts and figures of his day-book and ledger! How snappishly did *I* reply to poor Mr. Loader, when that gentleman desired to know the cause of my unhappiness! and how determinedly did *I* quarrel with Messrs. Close, Rice, Horne, and some dozen other youths, of my own



size, age, and condition ! I am afraid that once or twice I thrashed, rather unmercifully, a boy named Forrest, who I fancied grinned at me, but who did nothing of the kind, and I remember my deep shame on seeing him next morning with a blackened eye and a lacerated cheek. But that boy had the soul of a Christian and a gentleman centred in his little body, and on that morning he forgave me without an effort. This same little Forrest became afterwards an attached friend, and he now sits by me as I write. He is still a bachelor, rich, and tolerably handsome, and it is for the benefit of the fair sex, and at his own earnest request, that I make this announcement. His address can be had from our mutual friend, the publisher of this work, to whom I have in confidence confided it.

Sadly and solitary did I now wander about the streets each evening, looking out for the Richmond 'bus (they called it omnibus then, and it didn't start from St. Paul's), and feeling a sort of insane pleasure in looking at its driver and conductor. I conceive that at that time I was in a state border-

ing on distraction, and that the horses of the 'bus, from the serious way in which they wagged their heads, were quite aware of it. At O'Leary's I was little better than a lunatic, and contrived to talk the greatest possible amount of nonsense in one hour and twenty-five minutes—the length of time to which my visits were strictly limited. On such occasions Stephen and my aunt usually smiled good-naturedly at the silliness of my remarks, and, like the Richmond horses, gravely shook their heads. Whether they suspected that as a despairing lover I was entitled to a little forbearance at their hands, I know not, but certainly they acted as if they did, and this made me more miserable than ever. What I suffered no mortal can tell—silently, secretly, I had almost said unrepiningly suffered. Unrepiningly! oh no; for many a time has my heart risen in rebellion against God, and in the bitterness of my soul I have asked, "Why hast Thou made me?" but the next morning I have fallen upon my knees, crying out, "Lord, lay not this sin to my charge."

I complained of illness, after a time, and got a

separate sleeping apartment; oh, what luxury! I could now give way to my own feelings with the conviction that the prying eye of Jackson was no longer upon me—I could think of Eveleen, pray for Eveleen, without the slightest interruption or restraint, and this was a privilege I prized above all others.

One night, I was sitting in this room, and preparing for bed, when, greatly to my surprise, I heard a gentle knock at the door. I opened it, and Stephen Dorricks entered. He had been dining with Mr. Loader, and some other friends, that evening, and proposed sleeping at Cannon Street, in preference to seeking his lodgings in the Old Kent Road.

“Am I intruding?” he asked, mildly, as he stood slightly in the doorway, with his handsome, pale face turned inquiringly towards me.

By no means, Mr. Dorricks. Pray come in.”

“I really do not know that I am justified in doing so: the hour is late, and you will not thank me for accepting your invitation, though I own I feel strongly tempted to do so,” he said. “Mid-

night lamps (and yours shone out brightly enough as I came down the stairs) carry me back to my school-boy days, and almost make me feel young again. Come, I will be frank with you. I should like to sit here half-an-hour, and hear from you something of your early history. Believe me, Mr. Allen, I feel a deep interest in your welfare, and would greatly rejoice at your success; and that very interest led me irresistibly to your door five minutes ago. Am I forgiven?"

He held out his hand, and I took it; and, after a few words of thanks on my part, we sat down.

We conversed for some time on different subjects; and even on indifferent subjects, I own I felt charmed with him. I had heard of, and even partially experienced, the "fascination of conversation," as it is termed, and the marvellous power it confers upon its possessor, but never before to such a wondrous degree. It was not the language of Dorricks that arrested and chained you. No! that was simple, natural, and free from pedantry, or exaggeration of any kind. It was not the

subject, for it was usually such a one as most men choose, and which we every day see handled, skillfully or otherwise, in discussion. It could hardly have been the manner; that was earnest and convincing—oh, how convincing!—it is true, but calm, quiet, and almost unimpassioned. It was not the amount of reading, or laboriously acquired knowledge, brought to bear upon that subject; for Dorricks appealed rather to reason than to authorities, whether living or dead, seldom had recourse to quotations, and never made a parade of book-learning. What was it, then, that made the man so irresistible in conversation—so mighty in argument, so convincing in discussion? In what consisted his power; I cannot tell! Everywhere his influence was felt—nowhere was it explained. Whether he could explain himself, I am unable to say—perhaps he could not. But this much I do know, that he at all times used—I will not say *wielded*, for that scarcely explains my meaning or does him justice—that tremendous power, with prudence, skill, and moderation.

In a hurried sketch, such as these pages can only

lay claim to, it will not be expected that Dorricks's character should be as fully elucidated as in a work of more showy pretensions it would be—and I am constantly reminded that my story must be confined within very narrow limits. I can only give, therefore, the concluding portion of his remarks on the evening in question.

It wanted twenty minutes to eleven when he rose to leave, and, as I thought, reluctantly.

"You will sometimes come and see me, I trust, Mr. Dorricks," I said, looking intently at him! "I have now this little room all to myself, and I feel glad of it, for I will not conceal from you that Jackson is not exactly the sort of companion I could have desired."

"Why, no; I should think not," he returned, quietly. "Do you know, Mr. Allen, that I have tried to understand that young man, and failed? He is a perfect puzzle to me. He speaks well, and has read more, I verily believe, than half the scholars of Oxford and Cambridge, and yet there is a mixture of ignorance and simplicity about him that is quite inexplicable. Looking at him super-

ficially, he does not appear to have any well-defined notions of right and wrong, but once probe beneath the surface, and you will find a depth, and power, and originality of thought, that is positively startling. Kind-hearted and generous, I believe him to be, but weak and credulous to a painful extent upon some particular points. Wise, yet simple; learned, yet ignorant; enlightened, yet superstitious—a living moral paradox—explain him if you can.”

“I can answer for his kind-heartedness and generosity,” I replied, “for I have experienced both.”

“He is as impressionable as wax, and, in the hands of the skilful workman, he might be moulded to any form. Were I an ambitious man—which, I am thankful to say I am not—and that the life of another stood in my way, I could, in five minutes, convert this same Simon Jackson into a murderer.”

“He sometimes reminds me, Mr. Dorricks, of Doubtful, in the ‘Pilgrim’s Progress.’”

“Ah!” he exclaimed, stretching out a hand,

whilst his eyes sparkled, almost with enthusiasm. "Ah! happy, glorious Bunyan, what glimpses do you not give us of the unseen! Look at the river Jordan; the sinking Christian, and the trembling Hopeful; the men in shining garments—the golden gates—the paved streets—the tuned harps; and then ask yourself if this be not something more than a glimpse of that heaven wherein dwelleth righteousness?"

"Pardon me. Mr. Dorricks," said I, venturing upon a subject that I had long wished to refer to; but I have often thought that, had you turned your attention to the Church, you would by this time have made a name for yourself."

Dorricks smiled.

"My dear young friend," he said, "what you call making a name is very often but laying the foundation of a young clergyman's destruction, and rendering his preaching powerless and ineffective. The praise of man! After all, what is it? Mere breath. To be sure, if he be popular, his church is well filled—the empty pews of the neighbouring ones proclaiming that fact but too plainly; his



society is courted; his sermons are duly reported and commented on in the usual channels; his eye, his face, his voice, his very hair, are all described with the greatest accuracy; and each and every one of them is said to bespeak intellect of the highest order. Ladies gather round him as he leaves the pulpit, in the hope that the very shadow of his garment may rest upon them as he passes; and if one of them but succeed in inducing him to write his name in her prayer-book, or even mark a passage with his pencil, why, from that moment, she is a happy woman, and the admiration, if not envy, of her sex. A year or two rolls over, however, and that man is no longer heard of. A star of greater brilliancy and magnitude has shone out, and his light pales before it. For no fault that he can accuse himself of, he is consigned to the oblivion of forgetfulness; and, disgusted with the world, and all things in it, this once petted darling of capricious fortune seeks the unbroken quiet of some village churchyard.—But a word about yourself at parting. I have been talking with Mr. Loader this evening about you, and he thinks, with

me, that you will one day occupy a high post here. Believe me, that when that day comes we shall all rejoice. But, to speak plainly, I have lately witnessed a change in your whole demeanour, and so have others. You have become (pardon me if I am too plain) dull and gloomy, and apparently unhappy. I do not ask the cause of all this, but, whatever it may be, I would say to you,—rise superior to it. Cast away all doubts, and forebodings, and groundless fears; employ aright the gifts which God has so manifestly bestowed, and the blessings which He would have you to enjoy, seek the society of good men, and follow such, even as they follow their Lord and Master. Leave doubts and fears for the mere worldling—they belong not to, and form no part of you. He has doubts—he has fears—he has forebodings; but the language of the Christian is, and ever has been, ‘I know, and am persuaded.’ Think on this, my young friend, and let me some day have the satisfaction of knowing that these few words have not been spoken in vain.”

“Would that I could reason thus!” I cried,

fairly carried away by my feelings. "Oh, Stephen Dorricks, singularly gifted and blessed of God, look with a pitying eye upon my weakness! stretch out your strong hands, for I am weak and helpless; leave me not, for I fear to be left alone with my own heart! pray for me—pray that I may be saved from myself, the world, and the devil; for oh, they war against me with a cruel warfare!"

And this man prayed for me—prayed that I might become a better and a wiser lad; and when he left me, I laid my head upon my pillow, to weep in the very bitterness of despair.

Oh, Stephen Dorricks, in the solitude of the chamber in which I now write, I pause to think of you. I look back upon the past, and my eyes become dim for your strange, eventful life, and early death, are still before me. I see you as you knelt that night, and I feel as if I were again beside you. Oh, let me write on! Hand and pen, do not tremble so, but write, write on. Write of hope and happiness, and of a gentle woman's love; of children crowding your knee,

and smiling in your face. Write of your domestic joys, and the joys of others; of your uncle and aunt, green as the sapling, yet tough as the sturdy oak—of your own name and fame, and the name and fame of one dearer than all three—of the one dark spot in the summer of your life—the night of sorrow, which so soon was succeeded by a morn of peace, and joy, and happiness unutterable. Write of all these, and much more, ere it be too late; for a soft hand will soon be laid upon your shoulder, and a soft voice will soon whisper in your ear,—“It is twelve o’clock, dear George, write no more.”

---

## CHAPTER IX.

## AN ACCIDENT AND SOME OF ITS RESULTS.

MR. ROBERTS'S confidence in me seemed to increase day by day, and in justice to myself I must say that I did everything in my power to deserve it. Whether, if that gentleman had not been father to Eveleen I would have laboured so anxiously to promote his interests, is a question I should not now like to be called on to answer, but certainly I believe I would have done my duty under any and every conceivable circumstance. I tried to please him, and I succeeded, for I did everything with "a single eye."

One clear, frosty night, when returning home from O'Leary's, thinking of Eveleen, (I'm sure I never thought of anybody else,) and looking up at the stars as if I already fancied her among them, the cry of "Fire, fire," came faintly on my ear, and with it the low, distant roll of wheels. and the indistinct murmur of mingling voices. With

the speed of a buffalo I bounded forward in the direction indicated by the sounds, but a small sized, currish-looking dog who was wending his way also towards the scene of noise and conflagration—inspired doubtless with the philanthropic idea of either working an engine, or assisting in pulling up the water-plugs—getting at that critical moment between my legs, I was flung forward upon my face, where I lay kicking and sprawling for fully ten minutes before any assistance could be rendered me. Raised at length upon my legs, I felt that they would no longer support me, and I fell helplessly into somebody's arms. One said my neck was broken, a second my ribs, a third both thighs, a fourth (and he happened to be a surgeon) a simple ankle sprain. Groaning with pain, I was borne to that quiet home which I had left a few minutes before in perfect health and strength. Such is life.

They laid me tenderly upon a bed, and Stephen and Mrs. O'Leary hung over me in silent agony. A night of torture passed, and the morning found me in a high fever. How long I tossed about, it

would now be useless to consider. Days and weeks must have passed, but in my state of delirium I took no note of time. Still I knew and felt that everything that the two anxious watchers could do to ease me even a pang was being done, and that perfect recovery was only a matter of time.

One day, when rather better than usual, I lay with a small volume of Moore's "Melodies" before me, shading my eyes with my hand, for they were still very weak, and trying to read aloud the exquisite ballad, entitled, "Love's Young Dream." That song had long been a favourite with me, and I regarded it (though, I now admit, without any very just reason) as the most strikingly beautiful of all the poems of that wondrously gifted man. I got through the two first verses—deeply touching to most men, inexpressibly so to me—with tolerable calmness and composure, but when I came to the third, and which begins with "Oh, that hallowed form is ne'er forgot," all that calmness forsook me, and I burst into tears.

Long, bitterly, passionately, did I weep. Oh! it is too true, I cried aloud—too, too true. Moore must have known what it was to love hopelessly and in secret when he said—"It lingering haunts the greenest spot in memory's waste." "Memory's waste!" Beautiful beyond expression! I now feel, I know I do, just as he did when he wrote those words. My heart, and thoughts, and memory—all have become a waste, and so will continue without the fructifying influences of Eveleen's presence. I long for her—I pine for her—I die for her—I languish for want of her smile—I—but stay, let me think of Dorrick's words—"Leave doubts and fears for the mere worldling." What did he mean by that? Could he have—oh, what a fool I have become! Mr. Dorricks spoke generally, and could not have intended any reference to this all-engrossing, all-absorbing passion—how could he? She knows nothing of it—he suspects nothing of it—and even if he did he would not, I am satisfied, ever betray me. Ah! were he here now I think I could open to him my whole heart and soul—tell



him that there is a fierce passion consuming me with more deadly certainty than the fever that—

A slight noise, cutting short my further reflections, caused me to turn my head, and there, in the centre of the room, and not two yards off my bed, stood, in company with Mrs. O'Leary, her who was dearer to me than all the world, with her tender, truthful glance fixed wonderingly and pityingly upon me.

It was no dream or illusion, for I put out my hand and felt her, and saw that she was the Eveleen I had prayed for; still pale [and thin, it is true, but with the light of health and hope beaming in her loving eyes.

"Eveleen—Miss Roberts—God be thanked, it is you!"

"Yes, and oh! I am sorry to see you thus. I only returned from Richmond to-day, and I determined that the first visit I paid should be to your bedside."

Oh! now did I see her as she was. The true, pure, high-souled girl moistening my fevered brow and parched lip, speaking words of hope, and

comfort, and confidence, and bringing light and joy to my gloomy chamber. If I loved her before, oh! how did I worship her now! how did I pray for and bless her! and how did my heart die within me at the thought that the day might come when the light should depart from before me, and I should see her no more for ever!

I grew better, and still she came, sometimes with Mrs. Roberts, who was unremitting in her attention; sometimes with Jane or Mary Loader, but never again alone. Perhaps this was as it should be, and though I could have wished it otherwise, I tried to say, "It is quite right and proper."

When I could sit up, my chair was wheeled downstairs to the parlour, and there everybody read to me in turn, Miss Roberts included.

Did I wish ever to get well again? I do not think I did. Restored health could but deprive me of Eveleen, and send me back to misery and Simon Jackson. Sad, sad reality! I did get better, I did get well. I tried to smile and look resigned, and hope, and trust, and pray, and feel confident and happy. I tried to do all these and failed.

In a day or two after my perfect recovery, I returned with a heavy heart to Mr. Roberts's. The office was now to me a rayless dungeon, and my stool the log to which I was to be perpetually chained. I believe I looked like a malefactor who knows he is undergoing the punishment due to his offences, and seeks to avoid the eyes of his fellow-men. I sneaked and skulked about wherever sneaking or skulking was possible; hid myself in out-of-the-way nooks and corners, hung my head whenever anyone passed, and started when anyone spoke. Even when alone, I fancied that the ink-stand eyed me most suspiciously, and that my quill-pen took such general liberties with me, and evinced such a thorough knowledge of the state of my feelings, that I verily believe if I encountered a goose in the street I should be in constant apprehension of a whole regiment of feathers starting from her back and wings, and dragging me to the nearest prison. I had been annoyed, too, to such a degree by the insolent bearing of my penknife, that the very sight of a cutler's shop, or even of a cutler himself, caused my hair to stand on end. I

was constantly tormented with a desire to smash my hat, merely because it did not hang straight upon the hook, and this proceeding I looked upon as personal and affronting. My gloves, moreover, seemed particularly and unbecomingly obstinate, and often defied (and successfully) my efforts to put them on. A conspiracy seemed to exist between certain minor articles of my wardrobe and the ink-stand and penknife seriously to annoy and incommoded me on all occasions. This was a humiliating position enough, and I felt it in its intensity.

How I dreaded the sound of Mr. Roberts's foot, how I dreaded the sound of Mr. Roberts's voice, none but myself can tell. How I feared a disclosure and a scene; and that scene I accustomed myself briefly to describe. An office-clerk flying frantically from the presence of an indignant father, hoping, but vainly, to escape some tender impressions from his paternal boot; other clerks following the flying one, and giving chase, as if to a mad dog; shouts of laughter in his ears, and the hoarse voice of Jackson high above the rest. And the mud of the streets bespattering

him, and the rain from the clouds drenching him, and the little boys jostling him, and the little dogs biting him, and the little cocks crowing at him; and everything and everybody abusing, insulting, and ill-treating him.

On such things my thoughts ever ran, and such pictures my imagination ever drew. Over and over, I had come to the resolution of throwing myself at Mr. Roberts's feet, and confessing all. But when I looked at his steady eye, and his wispy hair, and his broad chest, and his burly figure, and his thick-soled boots, I found my courage desert me, and I slunk away, like a coward and a slave.

All this time I was becoming more and more conscious of the fact that Mr. Loader had grown cold towards me. Poor man, he had good cause! My waste-book and journal are only fit for the paper basket, and my ledger is as unintelligible as a ledger can well be; it is blotted, crossed, and scratched in every folio, and made to tell lies in every column, and present balances to a fabulous amount, and do all manner of extrava-

gant things, within the smallest possible space. I thoroughly succeeded in mystifying Mr. Snaggs, Mr. Rogers, and a half-dozen others, and they shake their heads significantly, and give it as their deliberate and unprejudiced opinion, that there is something wrong with me. I promise better things, when remonstrated with, and slip away at the earliest opportunity, to weep. My heart has, somehow, grown old suddenly. There is a thick darkness about and around me; and I can see nothing but the wide gulf which separates me from Eveleen. There is light enough for that, but for nothing else.

I am sensible that I grow thinner, that my coat is too wide for me, and that my vest laps in an unpleasant manner; but that is not enough—I become positively ill, and, worse than all, a doctor attends me. How he doses me! Perhaps he likes it—perhaps he doesn't—who can tell? At any rate, I am soon on my legs again, and Jackson grins at me, though not as of yore. He is taller by four inches than I, yet he does not brag of it, and I could ride comfortably on

his shoulders without distressing him. Yet Jackson is a coward, and Jackson is not ashamed to avow it. Smyth, two years his junior, and nearly a foot shorter, pummels him unmercifully, and grimly I advance to the rescue. How I turn the tables, black his eyes, punch his head, and otherwise maltreat his person, let Smyth, the injured, tell. Victor-like, I bear the crouching but highly grateful Jackson off, and he vows that he is mine for ever. I am far from believing him, though; for Simon Jackson, with all his good nature, no longer holds a place in my affections.

But time hurries me on, and under Mr. Roberts's roof I become almost a man. I look back, and see myself a little boy, seated upon the high stool, with Loader smiling at me, and telling me that he was once as small, and sat upon that very stool, and how he cut notches on its legs, and carved his name upon it, and inked it, and took innumerable liberties with it, for all of which he felt profoundly sorry, and seemed very much disposed to apologise; and then I think of the long years that rolled by me, bringing with them many

blessings, for each and every one of which I try to feel thankful. God has been very good to me through so many years; He will be very good to me to the end. Yes, as I sit in my chair this moment, with loving eyes bent upon me, and loving hands clasping my knees, and loving arms encircling me, I feel that there has not been one wish of my heart felt ungratified.

Do I tire you, dear reader? If so, let me make amends by turning to Richard Graham.

---



## CHAPTER X.

BEING A DRAMATIC CHAPTER, AND A VERY SHORT  
ONE INTO THE BARGAIN.

RICHARD GRAHAM, Esq., A. B., Ex. Sch. and  
Gold Medalist, and George Allen, an amiably  
weak young man, and nothing else in particular.

*Enter RICHARD.*

RICHARD. Good evening, George. Glorious  
weather! Shall we have a stroll?

GEORGE. As you please. Where?

RICHARD. Oh, anywhere.

*(Bus.—George puts on his hat, and the two  
heroes arrive at the place indicated by "anywhere.")*

RICHARD. How refreshing it is to get a sight  
of the green fields, and the budding trees! You  
don't often see them in the neighbourhood of  
Cannon Street, I fancy.

GEORGE. I know but little of the country, I'm ashamed to say, Mr. Graham.

RICHARD. I am sure of it. Pent up 'mid bricks and mortar, and smoke and fog, how long have you lived?

GEORGE. Nearly twenty years. A long time, is it not?

RICHARD. Aye, George, a long time, truly. But is it not your own fault?

GEORGE. My own fault? I hardly think so.

RICHARD. I do. Why, man, the world's wide, and wealth attainable. Young America stretches out her hands, and cries, "Come over and help us;" in other words, "Relieve us of our gold."

GEORGE (*coldly*). I thank you for your hint.

RICHARD (*gaily*). To be sure you do. Who would not? Take my word for it, America is the place for you.

GEORGE. And for you.

RICHARD. Oh dear no! I'll turn surgeon some day; and there are consumptions, and dropsies, and heart diseases enough here, to say nothing of broken heads, legs, and arms, which I look upon

as addendas to the general list. No, lad, London is my El Dorado; New York should be yours.

GEORGE. I like London.

RICHARD. What then?

GEORGE. I shall remain.

RICHARD. Be it so. I hope you may not repent it.

GEORGE. I hope not.

RICHARD (*laying his hand on George's arm*). My dear fellow, you are unhappy. What has happened?

GEORGE (*shaking off Richard's hand, and speaking very gruffly*). Nothing.

RICHARD. I fear something *has*. Everybody has seen the change, myself, of course, included.

GEORGE. You are mistaken. I never was more happy in my life; why should it be otherwise? I have youth, health, and strength, and the love of two beings who are everything to me.

RICHARD. No, not everything—goodness forbid. I could name a third, if I liked. (*Richard here introduces a little "bus," which consists in whistling rather dolefully, "I'd mourn the hopes*

*that leave me," and half buried his heel in a clay bank, upon which he is sitting.)*

GEORGE (*trying to look offended*). You doubt me, then?

RICHARD (*wiping his boot*). My dear boy, I doubt no one; but if I were to tell you that my good uncle thinks you are changed, what would you say?

GEORGE (*colouring*). Mr. Roberts?

RICHARD. Aye, Mr. Roberts.

GEORGE. Why, that he too is mistaken.

RICHARD. 'pon my life, I'm glad to hear it. Now I'll let you into a secret, my friend. Mr. Roberts meditates a trip to the Continent, very shortly.

GEORGE (*carelessly*). Indeed!

RICHARD. Yes, and, as he purposes being absent for some time, old Loader is to take the management of the concern, with the understanding that himself and his daughters occupy the house, to see that everything goes on right.

GEORGE. I'm glad of that.

RICHARD. Yes, I thought you'd be. You'll all

be as happy and comfortable together as Darby and Joan. The daughters shall play for you of an evening, and the father shall pray for you afterwards. Ha! ha! ha!

GEORGE. I don't like jesting with religion, Mr. Graham.

RICHARD. Oh, I'm a wild fellow, and mean no harm. You, or they, will make me all right by-and-bye, I dare say.

GEORGE. Is Mr. Roberts unwell, then?

RICHARD. Not he; he's as well as ever he was in his life, and that's saying a good deal. No, my highly imaginative young friend, he is not ill, but Miss Roberts is, and has been for many months, though latterly she seemed much improved; and so they're going to try what a warmer climate will do for her, if, indeed, she'll consent to leave London, which, I own, seems by no means probable.

GEORGE. And you recommended this, I suppose?

RICHARD. Recommended what?

GEORGE. Miss Roberts going abroad.

RICHARD (*laughing*). Faith, not I! If I had my will, she'd remain where she is. She's too good to *parlez vous* with those cursed Frenchmen. Better stay at home, and marry some honest Englishman—yourself, for instance. (*More “bus,” which consists in hitting George on the shoulder, and winking at him knowingly.*)

GEORGE (*confusedly*). Or you, or Mr. Dorricks.

RICHARD. Oh, confound Dorricks—he's not worth mentioning! But, seriously speaking, the poor girl's health is really alarming; and Roberts, who loves her better than he loves his life, is so befooled and blinded, that he cannot, or will not, see the cause. Now, I'm not very skilful in such matters, but still, I don't think I hit very wide of the mark when I say that she has lost her heart to some one, though who that some one is it would puzzle me sadly to guess. It may be you, for all I know.

GEORGE (*highly indignant*). Mr. Graham, why do you speak so to me?

RICHARD. Pooh, nonsense!—its only my way—mere manner—nothing under the surface, like

this Dorricks—will drop it some day—sooner the better perhaps. By Jove, there's little Rivers, the attorney!

GEORGE. What, that withered little man, limping into the cigar-shop?

RICHARD. The same. He never smokes, but goes in there every evening, to beg a pinch of snuff, and pick up the scandal of the day. That fellow will never die, or, should he chance to do so, Phoenix-like, a live Rivers will rise out of the ashes of the dead one.

GEORGE. Is he rich?

RICHARD. Oh frightfully! a millionaire, they say. Shocking old sinner! Wouldn't give a sixpence to save St. Paul's from conflagration, and has sent more men to the devil in a hurry than half the Jews and money-lenders put together. He goes to church on Sundays, weeps pious tears at the sermons, and tries on Monday to cheat the parson who preaches there, if he chance to meet him.

GEORGE. Is he married?

RICHARD. He was—has one daughter, loveliness

itself, I'm told, but living in some confounded prison of a place near Clapham, with walls as high as the monument, and as thick as a Dutchman's skull. Gad, George, there's a chance for you! Romeo on love's something or another, waiting to carry off Juliet in the garden. But tell me, what are your prospects at my uncle's?

GEORGE. Judging by the past, I should say fair.

RICHARD. I should say so too. Will you be angry if I be plain with you?

GEORGE. Certainly not.

RICHARD. Your prospects are even better than you imagine; but there is one in London, who, by his rashness and imprudence, may unwittingly destroy them all.

GEORGE. Who is that one?

RICHARD. Do you not know?

GEORGE. No.

RICHARD. Nor suspect?

GEORGE. Nor suspect.

RICHARD. Will you see me to-morrow evening?

GEORGE. Willingly.



RICHARD. Let it be at eight, then, on Ludgate Hill, opposite Benson's, and I will show you something and some one. Good-bye! Here's Jack Nelson, and I've something to say to him. Ah, Jack, how are you?—(*Exit RICHARD with Jack, R. U. E., whistling "My love is like the red, red rose."* GEORGE stands transfixed for a moment, looking after his friend, and then hurries off, L. U. E.)

---

## CHAPTER XI.

IN WHICH RICHARD GRAHAM SHOWS ME MY STEP-  
FATHER, PHILIP MARSTON.

WILL eight o'clock never come? Clocks and watches conspire against me, and time itself seems to stand still. Tick, tick, tick, and with unexampled gravity the pendulum describes curved lines innumerable, but without any influence that I can see upon the hands, and I look and look until it (the pendulum) seems a tongue wagging itself at me in derision. Were I a rich man, I should demolish that same clock, tongue and all, and commission that very Mr. Benson—whose name had travelled a little beyond Cannon Street, and of whose shop door I was that evening to make so unwarrantable a use—to supply its place forthwith. But I am not, so there it remains, detested, but unpunished.

The house (I mean the Cannon-street house) is

closed, but in defiance of the clocks; and daylight seems to fade from out the sky. It is but half-past six, so the guilty, erring St. Paul's says, and ninety minutes of mortal agony are still in store for me. I wander up and down the Hill, until my presence, too-oft repeated, attracts the notice of a rather undersized "Bobby," and I am peremptorily ordered to "move on." I desire to know (I hardly know *why*) the precise amount of discretionary power vested in that individual, and by what authority he thus interferes with the liberty of the subject. In order to afford me the fullest information on the point, I am seized by the collar, dragged to the station, and all but locked up for the night. An abject apology, however, a handsome tribute to the ability, ingenuity, and courtesy of the insulted officer, and I am released with a caution, and that caution is not lost. Have I ever, since that memorable evening, now twenty years ago, ventured to dispute a policeman's right to deal with the persons and properties of Her Majesty's subjects in any way that might seem best unto himself? Did I ever hazard a remon-

strance when that worthy chose to try the strength of his truncheon, upon some drunken, unresisting wretch's head, or dragged through the mire a hungry, helpless woman? Never!—emphatically! never! The man with the injured head might complain, and the hungry woman express a desire to walk, I, priest and Levite-like, “passed by on the other side,” and left them to their fate.

But, after all, eight o'clock, like the dinner hour of “Trotty Veck,” did come, and a few minutes after Richard Graham made his appearance.

We walked side by side, and I fancied that he could hear my heart beat against my ribs.

“Let us leave this thoroughfare,” he said, “for our way lies westwards.” We did so, and having turned up Farringdon Street, and to the left, walked for a quarter of an hour through byways and alleys, till at length we arrived at a small, neat, quiet street containing about twenty houses, with the doors painted a dark green, and their brass knockers shining like burnished gold. Two or three of these houses had their blinds drawn closely down, and at one of them Graham stopped

and knocked. After a slight delay, the door was opened by a grey-headed, serious-looking man of about sixty, dressed in a dark livery, and having a white handkerchief in his hand. He bowed gravely as we passed him, and Graham, leading the way up the staircase, and stopping at a room on the first landing, pushed open the door, and walked in.

The room was small, and in keeping with the house, but comfortably, if not luxuriously furnished. There were chairs covered with dark green leather, two lounges to match, a handsome, crimson-clothed table, a side-board, a few choice pictures, and a splendid mirror. There was no overcrowding, or over-furnishing; everything was in the greatest harmony, and the best possible taste.

"I have brought you here," said Graham, throwing himself upon a sofa, "to see one who, if he do not quickly leave this country, may (unwittingly, I believe) destroy all your future prospects in life. My uncle is a strange man, and if he once knew that this person was a connection

of yours, you would not occupy your present position for half-an-hour."

"To whom do you allude?" I asked, in anxiety.

"Why, to your stepfather, of course, Philip Marston."

"My stepfather!" I repeated. "How do you know him? I thought that by this time he was far away, and that he had already begun a life of rectitude, and thus atoned, in some measure, for his past offences."

"Come this way, then, and judge."

He rose and crossed the room, touched with a single finger what appeared to me a medallion of Marie Antoinette hanging against the wall, but which, flying back noiselessly, disclosed a small round window of about the diameter of a crown piece, and shining like silver in the beams of the setting sun. "Look," said he, extending one hand, and placing the other firmly upon my shoulder, "look, and satisfy yourself."

He pushed me to the glass, and in an instant the scene changed.

A splendid saloon, gorgeously furnished with

chairs, sofas, ottomans, sideboards, pictures, and full length blazing mirrors. Lights, suspended from the ceiling, threw their glare upon the faces of men of all ages, from the fair-haired beardless youth, of twenty to the hoary head of eighty. Some were laughing, with their hands thrust lightly into their pockets, or nodding familiarly to their companions; others pouring recklessly down their throats glass after glass of some intoxicating fluid, and then mingling with a crowd of fellow-men. Others, again, pale and trembling, every muscle of their ghastly faces twitching and quivering as they stood round tables, holding cues and dice-boxes in their hands; while others still lounged upon sofas, as calm and unmoved as the great pictures of some of the "old masters," which looked down upon them from their heights above. Piles of notes and heaps of gold lay strewn in all directions, but each under the eye of its respective owner. Inferior men glided noiselessly about, bowing, smiling, handing refreshments when required, and then dropping quietly into their appointed places.

I could not stir—my worst fears were realised—I was in a “gaming house”—the men were gamblers; many, doubtless, with broken-hearted wives and starving children; and oh, horror of horrors! high above the highest in that accursed throng, rose the bloodless face and flashing eyes of Philip Marston.

Aye, there he stood, separated from me by only a thin wall, almost as young, and fresh, and vigorous-looking as when on that dreary, starless night, I bearded him in the lonely streets of London.

I tottered back, my senses forsook me, and I sank, overpowered and helpless, into a chair.

When I again looked round, the scene had changed, and Graham was lying upon the sofa, and Marie Antoinette smiling at me from out the medallion as before.

“Come, George, rouse yourself,” are the first words that I hear.

I start as if from a dream.

“You are surprised,” and Graham came towards me.



"Surprised!" I exclaimed; "I am horrified! Take me from this place, I dare not stay longer in it. Oh, that man——"

"What man?"

"What man? Why Mar——"

"Pshaw!" said Graham, carelessly; "there is no Marston here, he gave up that name long ago. He is now plain Mr. Neville, traveller for a 'Light Wine Company.' Twelve months ago he was Symond Faulkner, a cigar importer. Two years ago he was something else."

"Oh, this is terrible! But tell me, do you know him?"

"Do I know myself? Alas, too well! George, until the last six months, I was just such another as Marston, but since I have gone among these Loaders, I have become a new man, and avoided the dice-box as I would the d—l himself. It's extraordinary all the good contact with such people does one."

"I thought he was in Paris," said I, after a pause. "I know he intended going there six or eight months ago."

“ Well, and he did go, and made a pretty mess of it, too ; got into some confounded scrape there, and quitted it soon after. I believe he fought some Englishman, and got a bullet in his chest. How the deuce the fellow managed to get over it so soon is more than I can tell. Now, my advice to you and I give it in pure friendship, is, to try and induce him to leave the country.”

“ Alas !” I replied, “ I have but little influence with the man. He would not listen to me.”

“ He is often to be found at a low tavern near the City Theatre, called “ The Shoreditch,” where, probably, you might, some time or another, get an opportunity of speaking to him ; here it would be dangerous.”

“ But how did you know that he had been my mother’s husband ?”

“ Simply because he told me so himself.”

“ Marston ?”

“ Aye, Marston himself. One night, in confidence, he gave me his history, whom he married, where and how his wife died, the names of her son and daughter, one of whom he thought was dead,

and the other clerk to a merchant somewhere in the City. Putting all these together, I had but little difficulty in arriving at the conclusion that his George Allen and my George Allen were one and the same person, and that Philip Marston, alias Neville, alias Faulkner, was his stepfather."

I groaned aloud.

"Oh! confound it!" exclaimed Graham, jumping up. "I'm sorry I told you anything about it, but if it were not that I thought it would serve you, hang the bit of me would have done it."

There was another pause, which I broke by inquiring (though there was no necessity for my doing so) if we were really in a gambling house.

"Of the very worst kind," he replied; "but here we are quite safe, and free from observation. You may remark that in this room you cannot hear the sound of a human voice, and yet I know that even now, whilst I speak, there are fifty men within a few yards of us shouting and swearing, to the serious injury of both their lungs and their morals. You will say, perhaps, this is contrary to the 'laws of acoustics.' No: I will explain."

I begged that he would not trouble himself to do so, and expressed a wish to leave the house without further delay.

"With all my heart," said he, with alacrity, and we soon found ourselves in the street.

The night was a lovely one, but a little dark, and thick clouds were driving through the sky, apparently at a rapid pace. We sauntered up the Strand, and as far as Somerset House, without speaking a word. Here a great crowd had collected round a drunken costermonger, who was successfully defying the united efforts of three policemen, a tinker, and a bookbinder, to remove him to Bow Street. We cleared ourselves of the crowd with some difficulty, but only to knock against a tall, muffled figure, just emerging from Fleet Street. The man (for the muffled figure was that of a man) turned sharply round, dropped the collar of his coat, disclosing, as he did so, the huge, inexpressive face of Simon Jackson.

"Jackson!" exclaimed Graham, starting, and looking a little surprised, "Jackson, is that you?"

"Yes, Master Richard," said the rascal,

quietly transferring his overcoat from his shoulders to his arm as he spoke. "I am going as far as Westminster, to see an old friend, who sails for Quebec in a day or two; and, you know, we shouldn't forget old friends."

"Certainly not. But why are you muffled up in that extraordinary manner? You look more like a man bent upon some deed of darkness, than a quiet, well-conducted, though not over-rational mortal, as I believe you to be."

"The rheumatics, Master Richard—the rheumatics—I'm getting an awful martyr to them. George (I should say Mr. Allen now, I suppose) knows all about it."

"Yes," said I, smiling; "poor Simon suffers a great deal, now and then."

"Why, Jackson, you never told me this before."

"I didn't like to trouble you, Mr. Graham; you have trouble enough upon your hands, I'm sure, without thinking of me," whined my old bedfellow.

"I must get the doctor to call upon you, Simon,

and see what can be done ; I'm sure you want a little rest, and a holiday just now, wouldn't be entirely out of place."

"The fellow's eye glistened. "Oh, thank you, Master Richard, its really too good of you to think of me—you, who have so much to think of. But I'll not keep you standing in the street, and so good-bye, gentlemen both."

He was gone among the crowd in a second of time, his tall, spectral form throwing its darkened shadow along the path, and guiding our eyes to him as he struggled onward.

"He is an odd fellow, is he not?" I whispered to Graham.

"He is a rogue!" was the quick response ; and the remainder of our walk was pursued in silence.

---

## CHAPTER XI.

IN WHICH JANE LOADER GETS MARRIED; AND  
STEPHEN O'LAERY SATISFACTORILY SHOWS  
THAT WOMEN CAN NEVER BE DEPENDED ON.

AN important epoch in the life of the Loaders! Miss Jane is about, in accordance with a certain good old custom, to take unto herself a husband: a short, red-headed young man, of about thirty, named Spriggs, a preacher on "probation," and in receipt, as I had been told, of twenty pounds per annum. Quiet and unobtrusive is this Spriggs, with some genuine humour, and a good deal of intelligence and common sense, and a singular freedom from "cant." He is not a "freewill" man, and does not (to use a vulgar expression) go the "whole hog" with Loader; but Graham pronounces him a "brick," and a "trump," and tells him (what he doesn't believe) that he will one day be a bishop in some back settlement of America.

The day comes, and they are married. We are a pleasant little group enough in the old Church of St. Pancras. Mr. Loader and his daughters (the former looking a little grave, I must confess), Mrs. and Miss Roberts, Dorricks, Graham, O'Leary, (Biddy was suffering from rheumatics, and remained at the Loaders' to superintend the wedding arrangements,) Mr. Snaggs, Mr. Rogers, an attenuated butcher, whose name I did not catch, a lawyer's clerk, who, I think, had some idea of going on "probation" himself, four preachers, a class-leader, and a mysterious stranger. These, if we except myself, the parson, the clerk, the sexton, and the pew-opener, (an old woman quietly dozing in a corner), completed the picture.

Of course, there was a good deal of becoming nervousness on the part of Miss Jane (*Miss Jane* for the last time), and she exhibited, on one or two occasions, a pardonable anxiety to shed tears, in which she was aided and abetted by the other members of the Loader family, and found ready sympathisers in the persons of Mrs. and Miss



Roberts. Stephen looked majestic in his dress-coat, white satin vest, black pantaloons, and frilled shirt. He stood apart a little from the group, and nodded approvingly at the Rev. Jeremiah Twaddle as he proceeded. That gentleman got through the ceremony very rapidly, for he was a railway director, and there had been a meeting of the shareholders called for twelve o'clock on that day, and it only wanted twenty-five minutes of that time when he began; so he rushed through the service with a speed that surprised even himself, gave the clerk an occasional chance of an "amen," bounded down the steps of the communion-table at the conclusion of the service, threw off his surplice, signed his name in the registry-book, seized his hat, bowed, and was gone.

"Quick work," said Mr. O'Leary, as he took my arm at the door.

Carriages were in waiting, and back to Mr. Loader's we went.

And we had a good breakfast, and, if possible, a better dinner; but Stephen was like "a fish out of water." The company (increased to two dozen)

were awfully grave, and interlarded everything with a quotation of Scripture, a verse from Watts, or a line from Wesley. This not being entirely in accordance with my uncle's taste, he withdrew shortly after dinner, to a recess in the window, and there fell fast asleep.

Mrs. and Miss Roberts and Dorricks left early, and my eyes followed them even to the carriage door; and Stephen, Richard, and myself moved off soon after. Mrs. O'Leary was to be taken home by the butcher, at a later period of the evening.

"Devilish slow!" said Mr. O'Leary, when we got into the street.

"Oh, confoundedly so," rejoined Graham.

"Why they were sermonising all the evening," continued Stephen, "and I can assure you that I was thankful for a decent opportunity to go."

"So was I," rejoined Graham.

"Ah, the Lord be with you, Galway!" sighed O'Leary. "A wedding—there is a wedding, and no mistake."

"How do you like Mr. Spriggs?"

"A sensible fellow," replied Graham, "and

by no means so stilted or puritanical as the others ; but they're a queer lot, take them altogether."

"That butcher," said my uncle, solemnly, "is about one of the most unfortunate-looking malefactors I ever set eyes on. 'Pon my life, I pity poor Mrs. O'Leary. I would not walk through the street with him for a good deal. His own sheep would bleat at me if I did. But I suppose this Riggs, or Piggs, or whatever his name is, gets money?"

"Not much, I should say. Loader is by no means rich, and there are three others to be provided for, you know."

"True, but the old gentleman seems close, and must have saved something by this time."

Graham shook his head. "His salary has never been very large, I believe ; and, besides, he had an awful scamp of a son who, seven or eight years ago, thought to come out a regular swell, and cost his father a pretty penny."

"And what became of him?"

"Oh ! went to the deuce in no time."

"Is he dead?"

"Well, I hope so, for his father's sake. He never speaks of him, and would not thank anybody, I should think, for mentioning his name."

"Was he any profession?"

"Oh, not he; a brainless fool, like myself, and would not turn his attention to anything."

"Strange I never heard of him," said my uncle.

"He left England about six years ago for China as a supercargo, or something of the sort, and has never been heard of since."

"I wonder how he'd like Spriggs if he were here," I said.

"There's no knowing," replied O'Leary. "Spriggs, as you call him, is not so green as he looks, or I'm mistaken. There's something in his keen, grey eye, that seems to wink at some of the vagaries of good John Wesley. But I say, Graham, why don't you get married?"

"I'm waiting for an 'heiress,'" said Richard, laughing.

"A mighty hard thing to get now-a-day here."

"I don't know that; they're plenty enough; but we can't all make love like you Irishmen."

"No, you are right there ; you Englishmen are uncommonly puzzle-headed in such matters."

"Still, with all our imperfections," remarked Graham, "we sometimes get on pretty well here. To do more, I suppose we must go to Galway."

"Galway, my friend," said Stephen, majestically ; "is the place to which a young fellow like you should go, provided he be intent on matrimony and £5,000 a year. You'll get the wife beyond all doubt, but it is just possible that you may have to wait a little while for the fortune."

"That's comforting," replied Graham, "£5,000 pounds in hope, and a lovely wife in possession."

"To be sure," continued O'Leary, "you may have occasionally a protracted visit from the father and mother, brother and sister, uncle, aunt, cousins, and other minor relatives of your bride ; drinking your sherry ; breaking the knees of your favourite mare ; shooting your game, if you have any ; spending your cash, and abusing your servants. Yet what of that ! Your wife is happy, and you know, or ought to know, that when you marry a girl you usually marry her whole family."

"Very consoling, I admit," muttered Graham.

"Very! If I hadn't the fear of certain legal functionaries before my eyes, I would try my luck there again, Graham, though to say nothing but the truth, I did that once and failed."

"You?" we both exclaimed in amazement. A failure in Stephen's case seemed to us a simple impossibility.

"Aye, ay! I'd tell you all about it now, only it's so long a story."

"Come, O'Leary," said Graham, "here are my lodgings; the night is young, and over a glass of good brandy-punch you must give us the particulars."

"Spare my blushes, I beg of you," replied Mr. O'Leary, rather seriously.

"Oh, nonsense; you don't know what good your experience may do two youngsters like ourselves. It may save us from I don't know how many shoals and sandbanks in the shape of petticoats, as we steer through life."

"Keeping that end steadily in view, then," said O'Leary, after a brief pause; "I consent."

"Come along, then. George will be excused if he's an hour or two later than usual to-night."

"George," said my uncle, philosophically, "is a young man whose reputation will in no wise suffer by the lateness of the hour. God be praised," he added, very solemnly, and looking upwards towards the starry heavens, "that I can say so much."

"Here we are," and Graham inserted a latch-key in its proper place, and we all three went in.

Richard's fire burnt brightly as we drew our chairs and sat down. The brandy was produced, mixed, tasted, and pronounced "perfection," and then O'Leary with a few premonitory "hems" began as follows—what he has since not unfrequently called, "A short epoch in his life, and which goes far to establish the truth of the adage, 'that women never can be depended upon.'"

"It is now somewhere about eighteen years since I, Stephen O'Leary, a strapping youth of two and twenty summers, on a sharp clear morning, at the end of February, with a double-barrelled gun on my shoulder, and a wiry setter at my heels, left the village of Athenry behind me, looking in the

distance as like a huge snow-flake as anything I can now remember.

“This same Athenry was, I would observe, at one time a place of considerable size and importance. Its ancient name was Athneri, a corruption of Ath-na-raigh, signifying the ‘King’s Ford,’ or ‘The abode of a King.’ This title originated, perhaps, in its having been at a very remote period, the residence of a certain provincial monarch, who is said to have exercised his princely functions in a most unhandsome and unkingly manner; putting the province of Connaught under increased taxation in order to supply himself with ‘Egg flip,’ (a drink by all accounts his majesty was very fond of,) and not unfrequently, of ‘a stilly night,’ sallying forth under cover of the darkness, and carrying off as many of his loyal subjects sheep as he could conveniently lay his royal hands on. If either of you should ever settle down in that classic locality (‘a consummation most devoutly to be wished for,’) you will find much to please and interest you. First, the ruined walls and towers; secondly, the King’s Court, as it is called; thirdly,



the ruins of the Dominican abbey, founded by the celebrated Baron Meyler de Bermingham close upon six hundred years ago; and fourthly and lastly, the 'chalybeate spring,' that has cured all the complaints, known and unknown, with which suffering humanity has been afflicted from the morning that Noah got up with a bad headache after his first night's 'spree,' up to this present hour. Oh, it was once a beautiful place, and Father Peter Curran, of the convent, will tell you the same. I wish you could see his reverence, for a better priest or a better man does not exist. Well, in order that I may not detain you, we will say no more on that subject, but leave Athenry and all its greatness as I left it on that eventful morning, and that was abruptly enough.

"There's a cross road, about a mile from the town, on the Galway side, where Mick Kinneen formerly kept an inn, and just as I was deliberating upon the propriety of going in and having a kiss from his bright-eyed, cherry-lipped daughter Mary, under the pretence of lighting my cigar, what the devil appeared through furze, smoke, and fog, but

the glowing features of long Jack Madden. Neither of you lads ever saw Jack? Ah, I thought not; and more's the pity. He was six feet four in his stocking feet, and, taking him every way, as fine a fellow as ever stood in shoe-leather—a little too spirited, if anything, but that's a fault on the right side. He once resigned a captaincy in the "Rangers," in order to challenge the colonel, because that distinguished warrior, who was a great church-goer, and water-drinker (both grave offences in a colonel), asked him to attend a Charity Sermon at Portumna, in aid of the Society for Promoting Christianity among the Ojibberways. Of course, the colonel, who, like somebody else that I now forget, would rather *eat* his sword than *draw* it, declined meeting Jack, who straightway posted his quondam commander. The mercy was, that he didn't horsewhip him into the bargain. Poor fellow! he was shot shortly afterwards, by one of the 'finest pisantry in the world,' who mistook him for Lary Dwyer, the process-server. And, certainly, the mistake was a natural one, for Lary was the exact counterpart of Jack—height, face,

and figure. Indeed, it was said that Jack's father and—but no matter—" *De mortuis nil nisi bonum.*"

"Well, as I said, out came Jack's face, and out stepped Jack's legs, immediately after it.

" 'Stephen, you thief,' he exclaimed, as he sprang forward, and warmly grasped my hand, 'what takes you out this hour of the morning? It's in your bed you ought to be, snug and comfortable.'

" 'Faith, Jack, I believe you're right,' I replied, returning his pressure with interest; 'an empty stomach and a foggy morning are not conducive to health. But what are you up to here? Has Mary Kinneen anything to do with it? I always thought you were soft in that quarter, and, 'pon my life, you'd make a most presentable son-in-law for *la mere*; just the man to be paraded on state occasions, when Mick's sixth cousin, the Dublin attorney, chanced to be in these parts, or old father Ryan (the Virgin be good to him!) dropt in for his dues. I'd stake this double-barrelled gun against a bottle of *eau-de-vie*, that they'd come down handsomely. And, talking of

brandy, let's have a pull at that flask I see peeping out of your pocket. By my conscience ! but its yourself that travels well provided.'

" 'Stephen,' said Jack, seriously, and giving me the bottle as he spoke ; 'Stephen, I have come down here on a mission of great importance, and I don't mind telling you that upon its success depends my future happiness.'

" 'He's in for it,' thought I. 'That infernal money-grubbing old inn-keeper has netted the finest specimen of humanity of his size and age in these parts.'

" 'Yes,' he continued ; 'I've got it here, Stephen, and no mistake ; the arrow—Cupid's I believe they call it—feathers and all.' He placed his hand on his heart, to denote the precise locality alluded to.

" 'Poor fellow,' I groaned inwardly ; 'you've got it beyond all doubt. Oh, my curse light upon all black eyes and wavy tresses—they play the very deuce with a man, soul and body.'

" 'I have tried to shake it off, Stephen, this feeling, but it won't go ; it clings to me tighter

and tighter, and I have neither strength nor courage left to struggle with it any longer.'

" 'I am sorry for you, Jack,' said I, for I really felt for him. 'If you wanted to back out, I could easily render you unfit for the marriage state by putting a bullet in your hip, or breaking your collar-bone at a steeple-chase, but since the whole thing'—

" 'Aye,' exclaimed my friend, striking his forehead; 'that's it—my own fault. Why place my heart within range of her battery? why let it play upon me till—till—hang it! what was I going to say?'

" 'Come, Jack, let's have no more of this,' I interrupted, and placing my hand upon his arm; 'you're excited, and not fit to talk just now. One question though, where is she now?'

" (Jack, abstractedly). 'She, aye she—Run, run, Orlando!—carve on every tree—the fair, the chaste, the inexpressive she.'

" 'Oh, nonsense, lad, as fair and as chaste as you like—and I grant you she is both; but, certainly not inexpressive. A little rhapsody is

good in its way, and don't understand me as objecting to it; but hang it, though Mary is a very pretty girl, yet—'

" 'Mary! Oh profanity of profanities. Know, half-blinded and misguided youth, that her name is—Angelina.'

" 'Well,' I muttered, thinking that the poor man's intellects were slightly deranged (I subsequently learnt that he was highly intoxicated) — 'Well, yesterday her name was Mary, and she wasn't ashamed of it either.'

" 'You have seen her, then? When? Where?'

" 'Are you mad or drunk, Jack? Who, for miles round, hasn't seen Mary Kinneen?'

" 'Stephen, I'll brain you,' responded Jack, with deliberation; 'that is, if you again mention my Angelina in conjunction with a vile 'shebeen' keeper's daughter.'

" 'Who on earth do you mean, then?' I asked, fairly puzzled.

" 'There is but one Angelina on earth, Stephen; one—only one.'

" 'Aye, scores for that matter; you've dipt

rather deep this morning, Jack, early as it is, or have not yet recovered from last night's debauch. But come into Kinneen's, since his daughter's eyes are not the batteries you complain of, and over your good brandy and his turf fire, you shall tell me everything about your divinity.'

"I led him unresistingly into the house, and having seated him snugly in an arm-chair, with a tumbler of soda-water, slightly dashed with spirits before him, and mixed myself a cup of that beverage which always cheers and occasionally inebriates, urged him to a full disclosure. He made it, and it ran somewhat after this fashion :—

" 'Stephen, I'm in love!'

" 'Granted.'

" 'Head and ears—can't pull myself out—dished—fairly done for.'

" 'Not a doubt of it; but let's hear the lady's name, and how it happened.'

" 'It's a long story, but I'll do all in my power to 'cut' it; so here goes. Two miles from where you now stand—sit, I mean—there is one of the prettiest slopes you ever saw in your life. Run

your eye gently down it, and you will see a sweet little cottage, embosomed in honey-suckles, creepers, moss-roses, sweetbriar, and the devil knows what else. Look through that diamond pane—(no, hang it, not that—the ‘mind’s eye, Horatio’), and you will see a neat widow’s cap, and under that cap, a pale, placid face. That is the mother of my Angelina. Beside her protecting wing is Angelina herself. Stephen, can you imagine eyes of the deepest, sweetest, loveliest, holiest blue? hair of a colour that mocks the rainbow? a cheek that shames the purest rose! a nose that you would, if you could, send to the ‘Art Union’ as a study; and an ankle that a man upon crutches would follow through the world? If you can imagine all this, you have still but a faint idea of the charms of my Angelina. I met her, it matters not how; have heard her voice, looked into her eyes, pressed her hand, and—’

“ ‘Made an ass of yourself. I see it all. Go on.’

“ ‘You give me but little encouragement.’

“ ‘Why, how can I? who is she at all!’



“ ‘Some lady of distinction I fancy, but as yet I don’t exactly know.’

“ ‘A countess, perhaps, Jack.’

“ ‘Aye, a countess. I thought of that before, Stephen ; ’pon my life, I did.’

“ ‘Or better still, Jack, a princess in disguise.’

“ ‘Come, lad, you’re jesting with me now,’ said Madden, a little peevishly ; ‘I’m sorry I let you into the secret at all.’

“ ‘Oh, bother ; you’re getting tart, Madden. The sight of so much beauty seems to have soured your temper, and driven you, moreover to strong waters. But to bring your story to an end, what do you mean to do ? Lay siege to her heart, and if she refuse to capitulate, run off with her at once ?’

“ ‘I’ve done that already,’ muttered Jack abstractedly.

“ ‘Run off with her ?’

“ ‘No, no, the artillery business—laid siege to her heart.’

“ ‘The deuce you have. Well, go on.’

“ ‘I cannot move her, O’Leary. She is deaf to

all my entreaties, blind to all my perfections ; she plays with me, Stephen, now that 'I've swallowed the bait, and—the fact of it is,' he exclaimed, bursting right out—'the fact of it is, I think I shall go mad.'

" 'Oh, nonsense,' said I soothingly, 'you shall do nothing of the kind. There's as good fish in the sea as ever were caught, and you're not the sort of man to be knocked about like a pair of old boots. Come, let us both see her. I as your friend, will proclaim your virtues to the parties most interested, and there is no doubt but that the result will be everything you can desire.'

" Jack eyed me suspiciously for a moment, ere he replied ; ' Well, perhaps your plan is not a bad one. At any rate, I cannot be much worse than I am at present ; so give me your hand, and, the fates permitting, eleven o'clock to-morrow morning shall find us in the best parlour of Holly Lodge.'

" I own I was somewhat disappointed at my friend postponing our visit to Angelina, as my anxiety to see her had greatly increased within the last few minutes. However, there was nothing

left out to await with patience the coming morrow, and to amuse myself in the interim the best way I could.

"The next morning came, and a miserable morning it was, too; drizzly and cold, with a gloomy sky above, and a road full of cart-ruts and yellow rain-water underneath. Never did two unfortunate devils look more wretched than ourselves as we trudged along, sinking occasionally to the ancles in mire, dirt, and abominations of every kind. Before we got a mile from Athenry, the dogs wouldn't have picked our bones, so sorry a figure did we cut; and wet, weary, and dejected, we arrived at Kinneen's, just as that individual himself appeared at the door, flail in hand, and ready for work.

" 'The top of the morning to ye, gentlemen!' he exclaimed, and in we went.

"A breakfast, substantial and good was soon served and eaten, a hurried toilet made, or rather improved, and forth we sallied on our mission, renewed, revived, and blest.

"I am satisfied that I do not exceed the bounds

of truth when I say that twenty minutes took us to the widow's cottage, a distance as I have already mentioned, of two English miles. I found it a charming little spot indeed, thoroughly sheltered and delightfully situated. Here was no scorching sun to embrown your cheek and crack your shoe-leather, or an infernal east wind to bring tears to your eyes and rheumatics to your bones. Sweet and peaceful it looked on that bleak February morning, with its latticed windows and rustic porch, its well-kept grass-plot, and neatly-gravelled walks; its flower-garden and its kitchen-garden; its apple-trees and its gooseberry-bushes, and lots of other things that I cannot now remember.

"We stood for a little time at the gate, admiring all this, and having pulled up our shirt-collars, now somewhat dogs-eared and drooping, we pushed boldly up the avenue, and knocked for admission."

"'If the mistress be as pretty as the maid we shall do,' I whispered to Jack, as the latter damsel tripped lightly up to announce us. A

pitying smile was Jack's only reply, and in an instant more we stood in Angelina's presence.

"Let me shut out for ever that glorious face. It haunted me years afterwards; it is present with me even now. I shall not attempt to describe her; that task were indeed vain, and profitless to boot. Let me rather come to the principal events connected with my story, and deal with Angelina (if I can) as with an ordinary mortal. Alas, to see her was to love—worship—adore! No wonder, then, that I was in elysium, paradise, nay, (not to speak profanely) heaven itself.

"Jack and I returned home two hours after, in gloomy silence, mentally cursing, and, I fear, mentally hating each other. For myself, I can honestly say that, had but that individual's muddy gaiters brushed ever so lightly my equally muddy inexpressibles, on that eventful afternoon, I should have felt it a sufficient ground for pistolling him on the spot. As it was, I returned home at war with him, myself, and every body else on the habitable globe—Angelina alone excepted.

"I think I must have gone to bed drunk that

night, for I have a faint recollection of decapitating on old marble bust of my great-grandfather, which occupied—and quietly enough too—for years, a corner in my room, under the impression that it was Madden, and, certainly, that impression (I mean, as to being drunk, &c.) was rather strengthened by seeing the said bust next morning without a head. You may laugh, Graham, but I am serious. Love will do anything with a man, except make him wise.

“If my unprejudiced opinion were now asked, I should say that Angelina gave me but slight encouragement, and this was why I loathed Jack. In the sunshine of her smile the fellow was happy, while I was praying that the earth might open, as it did once of old, and swallow up all three, and for ever.

“For two whole days I lay in bed, gloomily revolving in my mind whether, in the event of my speedy demise, any will I might make in behalf of Angelina and her heirs would be really valid and true. But, over this, grimly and slowly, stole the sad foreboding that my accursed friend (yes, I

called him so) would, if such a catastrophe ever took place, enjoy, in common with her, all my personalities for many years to come.

“‘No, Jack Madden,’ I exclaimed; ‘you shall never triumph over me. Rather will I meet you face to face, and beard to beard; tell you I will relinquish her only with life, then dare you to do your worst.’ And thus resolved, I again set out for Holly Lodge,

“Angelina was not at home—so her pretty Abigail told me. I smiled a ghastly smile.

“‘Doubtless Mr. Madden had called?’

“An affirmative nod, and my cup of misery was full.

“‘Mrs. Bradshaw was at home. Should I like to see her?’

“‘Of course I should. Why not?’

“I said this, I presume, rather fiercely; for the young woman turned slightly pale, and raised her hand suddenly to her throat. Whether she thought I meant some personal violence to her, I am, of course, unable to say; but, certainly, the quick start, the change of colour, the quivering of the muscles of the face and neck, seemed to

imply that she dreaded something of the kind. But she need have had no fear. There was one, and only one, whom I had doomed to a speedy and terrible destruction, and that one was the friend of my bosom, Jack Madden.

I strode—I believe I strode—into Mrs. Bradshaw's presence, looking, or trying to look, careless and indifferent. I laughed as I shook hands with her, and said I had spent a glorious morning; that I was to be married to a near relative—a daughter, in fact,—of the Emperor of Russia, and that that distinguished and enlightened monarch not only approved of the connection, but had generously presented me with a full dozen of red flannel shirts, as a slight token of his paternal regard. I offered Mrs. Bradshaw one, and felt highly offended when she declined permitting me to rush off for it at full speed. I spoke confidently of the Russian climate, the Russian people, and the Russian habits. I dwelt upon the moral and physical aspects of the country, and contended that in that, as in every other respect, it was second to no other



on the face of the earth. I proposed introducing her to his majesty's principal officer of state, who was at present on a diplomatic mission to myself; and hinted that it was quite possible, should the conference terminate satisfactorily, I might one day be the reigning prince. I have a notion that I grew a little warm as I proceeded, and very incoherent before I concluded; for I remember Mrs. Bradshaw quietly wiping her spectacles with a scarcely perceptible smile, and looking through the little diamond-paned window all the while, as, leaving the czar, the climate, and the officer of state, I took up the question of prize poultry, and strongly urged the necessity for an elaborate essay on unventilated taprooms.

"Like as a child is led by the hand, so did I suffer the good lady to lead me back to myself. It was done naturally and, I thought, compassionately, for she spoke of—Angelina.

"Her darling was not strong, far from it. Consumption, insatiable monster that he is, threatened her, and a London life, with its everlasting round of gaieties and pleasures, was a place, of all

others, to be shunned. This was why she sought out this secluded spot. Her father (Angelina's, of course) was dead exactly eight years. He had stood and fought beside the tattered flag of England, till he could stand and fight no longer. Death one morning took him quite suddenly in tow, and he scudded off with him, leaving his widow and orphan to his king and country. Angelina, however, was amply provided for by the deceased's will, besides being in the receipt of a small pension from the government.

"Angelina was nothing to me—never could be anything, I felt—yet I liked the words 'amply provided for.' Suddenly, I remembered Lieutenant Bradshaw's whole history, discovered that I was his companion during many a terrible and bloody engagement, (the names of which I now forget, but they all, I remember, took place a score, years before I was born) under Nelson, and distinctly remembered saving his life in Bengal when pursued by a hungry tigress and her eight equally hungry cubs. Mrs. Bradshaw believed, or affected to believe, all this, and showed herself proportion-

ately grateful. The man who, under such circumstances, interposed between the destroyer and her husband was indeed deserving of her thanks and gratitude.

"I ventured to suggest that Miss Bradshaw would probably prefer imagining Mr. Madden the hero of Bengal, and that that gentleman would, most likely, receive the honour with a proper grace.

"‘Mr. Madden,’ said the lady, with a sharp glance at me over her spectacles, ‘is a gentleman whom we both, Angelina and myself, respect and esteem; he has been useful to us under distressing and trying circumstances, and we cannot feel otherwise than grateful; but’—and Mrs. Bradshaw spoke with great energy and decision—‘there was nothing further; indeed, it was quite preposterous to suppose there could be. Angelina was but just turning nineteen, while Mr. Madden was at least—’

"‘Forty-eight, the third of August last,’ I put in. I knew he was some fifteen years younger, but, Heaven forgive me, I was determined, if possible, to demolish him at a blow.

"‘Forty-eight!’ Mrs. Bradshaw thought him

at least five years older, and as he was not at all handsome, she was at a loss to know why I coupled his name with Angelina's.

"I was at a loss, too; and I muttered something about friendship occasionally ripening into love.

"Mrs. Bradshaw believed that such was frequently the case, but thought that the present one must be regarded as entirely exceptional. Should she tell me why they looked upon Mr. Madden in the light of a true friend?

"Of course. I should be delighted to hear it. Indeed, it was the very thing I wanted to know.

"Well, the task would be a painful, perhaps a humiliating one, but she thought it due to my friend that I should be aware of his disinterested kindness. Some three months ago, owing to the stoppage of a large bank in which Mrs. Bradshaw had lodged a considerable sum—(she did not say what that sum was, but I set it down at fifteen thousand, and probably a few odd hundreds)—they were reduced, for the moment, to a state bordering on actual poverty. The circumstance was hinted to Mr. Madden by a mutual friend (the name of

the friend did not appear,) when he, in the most generous manner, placed at their disposal a fifty-pound note, which enabled them to live, and look hopefully forward to the time when the said bank should resume its payments; for, she regretted to say, it had not yet done so, though she had received repeated assurances that everything would be right in a few weeks.

“ ‘ And how long was it since Jack advanced the loan ? ’ I asked.

“ ‘ Nearly three months.’

“ ‘ Why the fifty pounds must be already exhausted. In a moment my hand was on my cheque-book; in another I had filled up a cheque for one hundred pounds (fairly extinguishing Madden and his beggarly fifty,) and was on my knees before Mrs. Bradshaw, begging her acceptance of it for ‘ the few weeks ’ she had named, as the greatest possible favour she could render me.

“ ‘ The good lady was melted to tears, and after a terrible struggle with her feelings, won the victory, and took the money. It is true that after the draft had been duly honoured at the

'Provincial,' the sum of £25 14s. 8d. would only remain to my credit—but what of that! Mrs. Bradshaw was accommodated—Angelina—I felt I could now call her *my* Angelina—was relieved and re-assured, and Jack Madden would henceforward be looked upon as a miserable impostor, and wholly unworthy the consideration of either mother or daughter.

“Need I say that I grew every day in favour, and was a welcome visitor at Holly Lodge, and that Jack’s sun began to set? The widow herself said openly to me that he was high-shouldered, and Angelina, (bless her!) thought he squinted. I, of course, heartily coincided with them, though it would have sadly taxed my ingenuity to prove that these assertions had any foundation in fact. But it suited my purpose to depreciate him, and this I did with a right good-will.

“Things went on in this way for at least a month. Angelina becoming more tender and loving day after day. Jack’s society was shunned, and mine courted; his arm refused and mine accepted; his presents thrown carelessly into a box;

mine, worn and prized. In a word, every pains was taken to make it appear that I was the favoured lover—he the rejected one.

“From personal friends we (that is, Jack and I) became deadly enemies, and glared at each other defiance and hate in that little front parlour. Now that I look back upon it, I am forced to smile, Two friends, staunch as steel, sitting but two or three yards apart, silent as death, and nearly as grim, scowling and growling, and wishing the world and all things in it at an end, and yet holding their ground as unconcernedly as if they themselves had no personal interest in their destruction.

“Contrary to my usual custom I walked home one evening. Why I did so I am now unable to say, unless it were to give me more time to think of Angelina than a hurried ride would admit of. Madden had left a few minutes before me, but as I stepped out I saw him in the pale moonlight, leaning on the garden-gate, in earnest conversation with the pretty housemaid. I did not wish to pass him, so took the rear instead of the front of the house, and got upon the road by crossing tw<sub>o</sub>.

fields and a holly fence. My survey of him was necessarily a very hasty one, yet it struck me that he looked greatly agitated, and that the muscles of his face twitched convulsively. 'What can be the matter?' thought I. 'Oh he has got his *congé*, doubtless—it can be nothing else.'

"I had not walked a quarter of a mile, when I heard the clatter of horse's hoofs upon the hard road, and before long Jack pulled up at my side.

" 'Stephen,' he exclaimed (it was the first word he had spoken to me for a long six weeks, and my heart bounded as I heard it): 'Stephen, let us have done with this cursed nonsense; we have been apart long enough—too long, God knows; so take my hand, and be the friend that until this foolish misunderstanding you used to be.

"I took his hand and pressed it warmly, and then dismounting, he threw the bridle-rein over his right arm, and passed his left within mine.

" 'I have been thinking,' he said, after a pause, during which we walked slowly along, 'that, like the fifth wheel to a carriage, I'm not wanted at Holly Lodge. Various circumstances have forced



this truth upon me. Every man possesses a certain amount of self-love and vanity, which I suppose are but other names for coxcombry and conceit. *My* self-love, vanity, coxcombry, or conceit—call it what you will—has this night received a sudden, and it may be painful check, and I have discovered a truth which sooner or later I should be forced to learn. I cannot now enter into particulars, but as you are richer, younger, gayer, and handsomer than myself, I leave you in the undisturbed possession of the field you have so fairly won.

“I thought there was a little irony in the tone and manner with which Jack emphasised those four adjectives of the comparative degree; but as I made all proper allowance for the state of his feelings at the moment, I said nothing.

“We parted at a cross-road; Madden on his way to a friend's place some three miles off, I to seek my own fireside, comfort myself with a reeking hot tumbler of whisky-punch, and then retire to my pillow, to dream of Angelina and of paradise.

"I dreamt of neither, strange enough, but of a huge sailor, with a shaggy red head and beard, and a most ruffianly cast of countenance. I thought he stood over me as I lay, and grinned so hideously that I fairly hid my head beneath the bed-clothes, as if to shut him out for ever from my sight. I awoke with fear and trembling, and he was gone. Again I dropped asleep, and again he was beside me, grinning as before, this time adding a grotesque dance to what he appeared to consider a highly intellectual entertainment. Whether the entertainment was for my special behoof and pleasure, was a question that admitted of considerable doubt; but I was forced to enjoy it, or, at least, seem to enjoy it, which possibly was pretty much the same to my seafaring friend. I thought he was slightly intoxicated, and that he admitted the soft impeachment to me in a moment of confidence, as he staggered against a chair and measured his length upon the floor. I thought, too, that as he floundered about upon my best carpet (filthy beast that he was), he muttered something about

Angelina Bradshaw, whom he called upon in rather a husky tone of voice, to pull off his boots and fetch him a pot of porter. An effort to fling a chamber-candlestick at the wretch's head once more awoke me, and finding sleep now impossible, I arose, dressed, and was out with the lark.

"But, if I were as early as the lark, I was assuredly not quite so merry. Madden's words had somehow made a deep impression upon me; and the sailor, who felt himself inconvenienced by his boots, in no way helped to remove it.

" 'What on earth is going to happen?' I asked myself. And echo answered 'what?'

"I breakfasted at nine, and at a quarter to eleven was most profitably employed tapping my finger-nails against the window, and whistling in a most disconsolate manner, 'I'd mourn the hopes that leave me.' Oh, this will never do,' thought I 'Action is the only thing for me. That confounded sailor with his boots and porter are as firmly in my head as ever, and all three must be driven out of it without a moment's notice.'

"I walked out again, and instinctively my feet

turned towards Holly Lodge. I reached it about one o'clock, and found Angelina at home, and alone. I thought she looked pale and anxious, and I felt a pang at my heart as I inquired after her health. She answered me tenderly, and satisfactorily, and for a time I felt relieved.

" 'You are out early, Mr. O'Leary,' she said, as I took a seat beside her on the sofa; 'how is your friend, Mr. Madden.'

" 'I don't know,' said I, a little tartly; 'he seemed well enough last night.'

" 'Indeed! He's a strange man. However, he is not likely to visit us for some time. I fear mamma and I have acted rather rudely towards him.'

" 'How?'

" 'He presumed, Mr. O'Leary, upon an obligation which we were under to him—to—to—.' She stopped, covered her face with her handkerchief, and burst into tears:

" 'Now was my time. 'Angelina!' I exclaimed, sinking on my knees and quietly withdrawing the handkerchief. 'Angelina! — loved — adored

Angelina!—nay, turn not away, but hear me. For *years* I have nourished in my breast a wasting fire which threatens to reduce to ashes this wretched body—its smouldering embers—its—its (come to my aid, good mother tongue! but, hang it! no, she doesn't understand Irish.) I say, 'the slow fire that consumes my vitals now—(Hem, Coleman the Younger)—I mean, that Madden's audacity has loosed my tongue, and my bosom now swells with virtuous love and honest indignation. Yes Angelina, what has made me sever so abruptly the sacred ties of friendship, and doom to destruction the best, but most presumptuous of men!—what but the hope of winning a smile from you, perhaps a tender glance? Believe me, I am no ordinary man. I love not like an ordinary man—' I never sued to friend or enemy' (Shakespeare). 'I am incapable of it—were I to try it, I should be disowned by the O'Leary's, now and for evermore, and my name become a bye-word for I know not how many successive generations. But now—ah, look at me!—cast me not utterly away. I cannot live save in

your presence : without you life and light are but the death and darkness of despair—this world a wilderness, or something worse, its inhabitants savages of the first water, and myself like Nebuchadnezzar of old (excuse the simile) all ‘toe-nails and feathers.’

“The toe-nails and feathers, I verily believe did the business, for she laid a hand gently upon mine and sobbed, but not so violently as before.

“ ‘Bid me not rise,’ I continued, ‘until I know my doom. Am I to live, to walk abroad, to enjoy the green fields and sparkling brooks, to look upon the waving corn, and welcome the hour when the last grain shall be dropped into the bucket, and the sum of my happiness be complete ; or, shall I live to go forth from this room a crushed and mutilated wretch, dead to the world and all its joys, alive only to the worst feeling of our nature—a gloomy revenge.’

“Her frame quivered, but she did not speak.

“ ‘It is but a word,’ I whispered, as my arm passed round her waist. ‘Devotion like mine claims its reward. For you I would live beside a

crater, or perch upon a slumbering volcano. For you I would challenge Fighting Fitzgerald himself, were he alive, or defy O'Connell before assembled Kerry. For you I would beard, as Fin Macboul, of glorious memory, once said, 'the lion in his den—the Douglas in his hall,' and make a prisoner of the one, and a spatchcock of the other. Why, then, do you look coldly on me? Remember that I could do all that I have said, and much more that I have not said, to hear from your lips those three little words—'I love you.'

"My head grew dizzy as I finished, for my eloquence was quite exhausted. But right upon my shoulder was laid a fair, soft cheek; and straight to my heart went a low, sweet voice, and doubt and darkness had vanished for ever.

"I folded her a thousand (no, I beg pardon, a hundred) times in my arms; I pressed her to my heart; I called her my own, and begged that an early day might be named, on which the Saxon Bradshaw might be merged in the Celtic O'Leary. She blushed, and promised to consult her mother that very night.

---

“ ‘I am the more anxious about it, my love,’ I said, ‘from a dream that I had last night, in which you were, ridiculously enough, mixed up with an inebriated, and not over-good-looking sailor.’

“ ‘Shall I ever forget the cry that now burst from the lips of my betrothed, as she sunk upon the floor like one dead?—never, were I to live to the day of doom, or a day beyond it.

“ ‘My first thoughts were to summon assistance; my second—and second thoughts are sometimes best—to place her upon the sofa, moisten her lips and forehead with cold water, open the window, and await the result with as much self-possession as I could call up for the occasion.

“ ‘In about ten minutes she revived, and after a little time I learnt from her that, since her poor father’s melancholy death, the slightest allusion to a sailor was always attended with similar results.

“ ‘What more natural? I inwardly cursed my stupidity, and outwardly promised never even to think of a buffet of salt water again.



In a quarter of an hour Mrs. Bradshaw returned. She looked a little excited, as I thought, on entering, but calmed down immediately on seeing me, and we shook hands most cordially. I soon after took my leave, being desirous of giving Angelina an opportunity of bringing the subject nearest my heart under the good lady's notice.

"We parted (Angelina and I) at the gate, where I had seen Madden talking with the housemaid, and I smiled as I remembered it. I took my betrothed in my arms, and pressed her again and again to my heart. She trembled violently, as she disengaged herself from my embrace, and with a deep sigh, said 'Good night, dear Stephen, and may God for ever bless and guard you!'

"I walked slowly down the road, pondering upon the earnestness of her manner, and the solemnity of her 'good night;' and, on turning round, at a bend of the road, I saw her—and as distinctly do I see her now—standing as I left her, and looking sorrowfully after me, one hand pressed firmly against her throat, as if to stay its throbbings, and the other hanging motionless by her side.

---

“And so, upon that clear, cold night, with the starry heavens alone for a witness, I parted from the only woman that (for the time) I ever really loved.

“The next morning immediately after breakfast I set out for Holly Lodge, with all the feelings of a husband deep seated in my heart. I ought to have mentioned before (but perhaps it will do now just as well) that there was a small orchard at the rear of Mrs. Bradshaw's house, and that frequently, to avoid encountering Jack, I had climbed the wall, and jumping down, sat patiently in the summer-house until I heard his retreating footsteps. Now, be it known to you, that on that particular day an apple-tree—with more arms than usually fall to the lot of an apple-tree, and which had, by its unsightliness, on various occasions given me personal offence—reared its detestable crest as I approached the house. With a grim smile I strode up to the wall, dropped myself down from its top, after my usual fashion, and advanced towards the object of my hate, with a look so menacing that it quivered in every limb and joint of its hideous body. I

shook one of those limbs savagely, but shook myself the next instant; for there, as I'm a living man, stretched on a rustic seat, with a pipe and pot before him, was the sailor of my dreams. Was I deceived? Impossible! There was the red head, dirty boots, and half-tipsy air, just as plainly to my waking senses as when they exhibited themselves for my delectation at O'Leary Castle.

"I held my breath and gazed in mingled horror and disgust at this wretched caricature of a 'jolly tar,' and being hid from his view by the offending apple-tree, I was enabled to watch his movements without being observed.

"He was apparently about five-and-forty, short and thick, with a coarse, red face and neck, a snub-nose, and a gash which, for politeness-sake, I suppose I must call a mouth. He was well and cleanly dressed, always excepting his boots, which were—and neither of you will be surprised to hear it—infernally dirty. Never in the whole course of a rather lengthened and chequered career had it been my misfortune to behold an uglier man. Were it otherwise I would now candidly admit it.

---

“ ‘What the h—ll does all this mean?’ growled the ruffian, as having emptied the vessel, he shook the ashes from his pipe and prepared to refill it. A man comes here to see his own wife, and when he axes civilly where she is and what she’s up to, he’s told by an old craft, rigged up like the figure head of the ‘Mermaid’ that I once sailed in, ‘to be off’—‘that’s there’s no such person here’—‘that I am quite mistaken,’ and a lot of d—d nonsense of that kind. Now, I’m blessed if I’m going to stand all this. I like a joke as well any swab that ever ‘bent on’ a ‘clew-line’ but I’m going tarred if this here one aint more than I can stomach. If Mary (oh, thought I, that pretty, little rogueish maid has been giving her loving spouse the slip, and the deuce a bit of me wonders at it) had let me know when she was making for another port, taking with her my goods and chattels—I say, if she had written to me, and said, ‘Dear Bill, I’m here, or there, or wherever the place might be, and getting on swimmingly, with a fair wind and plenty of canvas, and a rich captain as doesn’t spare the

blunt,' why, then, I'd have said, as any affectionate husband ought to say, 'Go on, Mary, my lass, keep your head above water, and your weather-eye well open, and it's all right.' Now, that's what I'd call private and confidential. But, Lor' bless you (he looked straight at the empty pewter, so that I presumed he was addressing it), there's nothing of the kind. A naval hero is no one here, and so that old griffin tells me to crowd all sail, and make for the nearest port at the rate of six knots an hour, or that there'll blow a most damnable hurricane presently. Now, as I said before, I wasn't a-going to stand all this, so I bears up to the next public-house, a queer old 'caboose' of a place, refreshes myself gloriously, lays in another potfull, gets over that there wall, and, fair weather or foul, I drops anchor here to-night, and that's flat.'

"The rascal settled himself with great deliberation upon the seat, and, overcome with the liquor, was soon fast asleep.

"I entered the house hurriedly, for the purpose of calling attention to my sleeping friend, and

having him summarily ejected from the premises, when I was as hurriedly met by Mary, who threw herself in my way, and with an earnestness that at once arrested my attention, entreated me to go no further. 'We are all in confusion here,' she said, 'and hardly know what to do. Miss Angelina is very ill, and my poor mistress half distracted. I myself am turned topsy-turvy, that—'

'A loud snort from the summer-house brought her to a full stop.

"'What is the matter?' she asked, in some alarm.

"'Only a drunken sailor,' said I, maliciously; 'and, I think, he seems to know you very well.'

"The next moment I repented my rashness, for with the words came a cry from the poor girl's lips, and she clutched at me nervously for support.

"'Great heaven!' she exclaimed, 'where will all this end? Mr. O'Leary, as you are a gentleman and have a regard for my mistress, leave me

to get that sot quietly out of the house. In two hours you may return, and I promise you—'

" 'Two hours, and Angelina ill?'

" 'I deceived you—she is weak and nervous—nothing more. I watched by her last night, but she is now better. This business I must manage myself, and of all things keep her from coming down stairs. Should she chance to meet the wretch, the sight of him would kill her.'

" 'What do you mean, woman,' I asked, rather angrily, and what has that miserable husband of yours to do with my intended wife?'

" 'My miserable husband!' she repeated, looking fixedly at me — 'my miserable husband, and your intended—poor, deceived,'—she stopped suddenly, and, quick as the lightning's flash, came a bright gleam of intelligence across her face.

" 'Yes, you are right,' she exclaimed, in an altered tone, 'he is wretched, and I am wretched, and we are all wretched. Now go, in God's name; come back in two hours, and you will find—no matter what.'

“‘Why, you are crying, girl!’

“‘How can it be otherwise? See a tear has fallen on your hand, let me wipe it off—there!’

“She pushed me gently out, seized my hand (the tear-wet hand, I think) pressed it to her lips, closed the door upon me, and was gone. I now looked at my hand, and saw, for the first time, that twenty drops had found a lodgment there, instead of one.

“I do not know how I spent the two hours, except that it was neither in eating, drinking or sleeping. I have some idea—a faint one, it is true—that half that time found me three or four miles from Holly Lodge, sitting in a recently dug potatoe-field, and smiling feebly at two crows, who were quietly inspecting, at some little distance, the internal economy of one of those esculents. I thought they looked at me rather pityingly, and exchanged winks and nods with each other, which were evidently intended to convey their own individual impressions as to the precise cause of my unhappiness.

“Five minutes, George, and I have done. I



returned in the evening, to find a small black kitten, and a pet rabbit, the only inmates of Holly Lodge. The rest were gone."

"Gone!" cried Graham.

"Yes, gone," said Stephen, composedly. "Mrs. Bradshaw, Angelina, the girl, the sailor, every living soul of them gone—the cat—the rabbit—the furniture, and a blackened hearth alone remained."

"And what became of them?"

"A few lines in Angelina's hand told me all I cared to know. She was already married, and the sailor was her husband. Poor wretch! She might have smelled his boots any day a mile off. In his absence on a voyage to Boston, she yielded to the temptations of her landlady, an ex-Bond-street milliner, and ran off, taking with her all the portable property of the absent tar. The milliner accompanied her, and, under the name of Bradshaw, sustained the character of mother to the life.

"Little more remains to be told. They came to Holly Lodge (and how they found out this

spot Heaven only knows,) laden with the spoils, took it, furnished it, lived in it, and, to some extent at least, swindled in it. Mrs. Bradshaw was accomplished, as all milliners are, and taught Angelina (her real name *was* Mary) music and dancing, and a score of other things, that I cannot now remember, and, for a time, went on as merry as marriage-bells. Suddenly, and without warning, our nautical friend appeared upon the scene, and all was changed. Nothing now for her but to return. Had she refused to do so. Tar-and-Water would have strangled her on the spot."

"And have you never heard of her since?"

"Yes. She contrived, a month afterwards, to give her husband the slip a second time, and made her way to Paris, where she fell in with a notorious blackleg, named Russell, with whom she travelled for nearly three years. That gentleman happening to die suddenly, received his deserts—"a pauper's grave"—and she returned to England and the magnanimous blue-jacket, then received her with open arms. Since that

time she has fallen, if possible, lower in the social scale; was once imprisoned for debt, twice for robbery, and may now be seen (a little faded, no doubt,) cigar vending in the immediate neighbourhood of the clubs, any time between the hours of nine and twelve P.M."

---

## CHAPTER XII.

## CONTAINS A VARIETY OF THINGS.

IN the happiness of others was I happy myself; I think not! The gulf between Eveleen and me yawned wider than ever. Dorricks' position in the family distressed and alarmed me. Physically and mentally, he was greatly my superior, and his easy unconstrained familiarity with Mr. Roberts and his wife led me to the conclusion that he held a high place in their esteem. Besides, he was there as a member of the family, a young man of unspotted character, great abilities, and, I presumed good expectations, and would have proved a formidable rival to any despairing lover, how much more so to my own poor self! Twenty, thirty, aye, a hundred times, I was on the point of rushing frantically from my desk, and seeking, in some far-off place the peace that was denied me here. But would not this be criminal? I asked myself. It would, myself, answered, and so I stayed—

stayed for days, and weeks, and months, aye, and years, until I felt the down upon my cheek had become hair, and that manhood, almost insensibly, was upon me.

Yes, dear reader, I am now quite twenty, with an uncontrollable passion for razors, and a calm contempt for boys.

About this time I was of signal service to Mrs. Roberts.—A fire broke out in the establishment, which, at the outset, threatened me and its inmates with destruction. I was the first to discover it; roused the sleeping house, gave the alarm, and in two hours all danger was past. The injury done was but trifling, thanks to the energetic measures adopted, and business was resumed the next morning, as if nothing unusual had happened. O'Leary somehow heard of the fire twenty minutes after it had broken out, and his colossal figure might have been seen 'mid smoke and flame, daring where danger was, and encouraging, by his example, others to still greater exertion. What a splendid fire-brigade man the poor fellow would have made!

Mr. Roberts gave me, in a few days afterwards, a handsome gold watch, as an appreciation of my services, with a plain silk riband attached. The riband, he said, was his daughter's gift, for he disliked chains or ornaments of any kind, and Miss Roberts knew it.

I was now invited twice a week to the Old Kent-road—Mondays and Thursdays. Mr. Roberts thus divided the week, for he never saw anyone on Sundays. Mr. Roberts was very kind (I'm afraid I have said that before), and usually kept me in conversation whilst Dorricks and Miss Roberts sang and played together, or walked up and down the neat, well-kept garden, at the back of the house—at one time apparently in an animated conversation, at other times silent, and, as it seemed to me, reserved. How I watched them! Eveleen, in her plain evening dress, fair hair, and clear violet eyes; Dorricks with his fine, commanding figure, pale, handsome, face, and easy, graceful, unembarrassed manner. Were they happy, those two young hearts? Alas, who can tell?

Meanwhile, I often see the Loaders. Poor,

sweet, gentle little Fanny is now almost a woman, but she will never be a strong one, I fear. She is as gentle, and as patient, and as pretty—prettier perhaps—as ever, and I love, of all things, to read or talk with her of an evening, or bring her a book from a library, or a bouquet from Covent Garden, or give her a description of the last new bonnet, for the dear child has a weakness in that way, and we all try to humour and gratify her. Not that it takes much to do that, either, but everybody pretends that it does, in order that all may do something towards making her happy.

“Oh, how good of you, George!” she would say, “to come here to talk to the poor invalid, in this gloomy little room, when everything looks so bright and gay outside! It is very selfish of me, but I think I should feel so sad if you did not come.

“I shall always come, dear Fanny,” I replied.

“I know you will—you are one of my oldest friends. Do you remember when papa brought you here first to see us?”

"Yes, Fanny, well."

"I said I should like you then, George, and I was right—I *have* liked you.

"How little have I deserved it, my poor child?" I said, smiling sadly.

"I am not a child now, George," she interrupted, throwing back her brown clustering ringlets, and fixing her earnest blue eyes upon me,—"I am not a child now; indeed, I don't think I ever had a child's feelings, or a child's heart; but I am the youngest, you see, and the weakest and the most helpless, and so you all pity and help me."

How transcendently lovely was that pale, white child-like face, now raised to mine! how much of what is pure and heavenly was stamped upon it!

"But you are getting better and stronger," said I, cheerfully; "we all see it—we all know it."

"I should like to get well, George, for all your sakes, but I don't think I ever shall; indeed," she added with a sudden energy, "indeed, I am sure I *never shall*."



I was unspeakably shocked, and the tears rose to my eyes as I said :

"Dear Fanny, poor fragile child, you must not speak thus ; you will yet get well and strong ; the warm skies are coming, and will soon make this little room so happy and cheerful, that my old friend Fanny Loader, upon whom so many hearts are set, will get new life, and health, and vigour."

Again she smiled, "No, George, no !"

"She paused, and then added—"Are you angry that I call you George ?"

"Angry, Fanny ! I should be indeed angry if you did *not*. Why, what put such a thought into your foolish little head ?"

"I'm sure, I don't know," she replied ; "but, tell me, is it a foolish little head ? *Do* tell me, George ; is it *such* a foolish little head ?"

"No, my dear ; I was only jesting ; you are growing a very wise little woman, and I am getting some of your wisdom every day."

"*My* wisdom ! O George !" and the "little head" was shaken playfully at me.

"Yes, *your* wisdom, and I wish you would

spare me a little of your patience, and your fortitude, and your gentle, unrepining disposition. You *could* do so if you would."

Again the little head was shaken, but this time wearily, and the pale fingers were pressed upon her bosom, and the white throat worked spasmodically, and her whole frame seemed to undergo a mysterious change.

"I am not well," she said faintly, "but do not tell anybody. Papa, and Mary, and Sophie, and the rest, would be so alarmed; and I'm sure I wouldn't have even poor little pussy, there, frightened on my account."

"What o'clock is it, George?"

"I told her!"

"Papa will soon be here, and dear, good, Mr. Graham, and—and—Mr. Dorricks. How do you like him, George?"

"Who?"

"Mr. Dorricks!"

"He *seems* a very good man, Fanny, and is a very *clever* one."

"He is very clever—at least, papa says so; and yet I don't think I shall ever like him."

"Why not?"

"Oh, I don't know—I can hardly tell you; but there's something about the man that makes me wish I had never seen him. I know it's very wrong to say so; but I cannot help it.

"Everybody speaks well of him, Fanny."

"Yes, I know that; but still I cannot avoid thinking that everybody is mistaken, and that they will find it out in the end. Had I the world's wealth I would freely give it to save Eveleen Roberts from this Stephen Dorricks."

Poor girl, in after-years how I remembered her words!

---

## CHAPTER XIII.

## IN WHICH I MEET MY STEPFATHER.

SHOREDITCH is not a classical locality, nor was it eighteen or twenty years ago, but a crowded thoroughfare, with coffee-shops and gin-shops, very much like the Shoreditch of the present day.

Somebody has written a story about the "Miser of Shoreditch," and succeeded in filling a tolerably stout volume with his short-comings and delinquencies; but I am not aware that that gentleman (the miser) had any palpable existence, save in the prolific brain and excited imagination of the writer himself. I believe the "romance" (I will call it one) was dramatised, but whether it proved a profitable speculation for he of the "Standard" or the "City," I am quite unable to determine. Certain it is that the miser, real or imaginary, created a terrible sensation at the time, and the lessees of the "minors" would have

been fools had they not profited by it. I have seen worse "sensation dramas" than that same miser, and if I live long enough, and feel theatrically inclined, shall, doubtless, see many more. We have now fallen upon the days of "Colleen Bawn," "Peep-o'-Day Boy," "Duke's Motto," "Ticket-of-Leave Man," "Savourneen Dheelishes," and Mr. Pepper's "Ghost," and what fresh "sensation" to-morrow will bring forth, who shall determine? It is clear, then, that Shoreditch must not be trifled with in these pages. The "Miser" (on the stage) has gone the way of all flesh, as most misers do, and I should be sorry, indeed, to say one word disrespectful to his memory. Let me deal with Shoreditch, therefore, so far as myself is concerned.

If Mr. Hopkins of "the Shoreditch," be yet alive—and I see no reason why he should not—let me venture to express a hope that he has by this time learnt the beauty of cleanliness, the value of light, and the comfort of ventilation; for in all these three essentials was his "Bar-parlour" singularly destitute on the night of the fourth of

March, 1843. Truly, it was as dreary, dirty, desolate, and disreputable-looking on that memorable evening, as the eye could well see, or the heart conceive. Into it, however, I must of necessity enter, which I do, shaking the rain from my hat and wiping it from my face, as the "pot-boy—and I hope he's now a landlord, if 'twere only for that one kind act—considerately lights a match, waves me towards the "parlour," and then cautiously guides me to a seat. I sit down, for I am tired, and order a glass of stout.

The "stout" is paid for, but for half-an-hour at least it remains untasted. I have spread out my arms upon the table, wet and dirty as it is, and lain my head upon them sadly and wearily. I am in the dark, and darkness is a relief, for I weep long and bitterly. My heart is bowed down, and I care not how soon it breaks.

This day Dorricks has been declared the accepted lover of Eveleen, and as Mr. Roberts does not understand long courtships, they are to be married in three months.

"I always intended them for one another,"

said that worthy gentleman, "and I see no use in delay."

My cup of misery is full to overflowing.

Like Job, I curse "my day."

Curse it in agony—curse it in despair.

And "despair" has slain millions of human souls.

"The Shoreditch" and its darkened parlour suited me. Here I could give full vent to my sorrows without the prying eye to see, or the listening ear to hear. Here, I could beat my breast and tear my hair, and no human hand to stay me. Here, if the devil tempted me, I might end all my troubles in this life, and awake to new and never-ending horrors in the next. In the back parlour of the "Shoreditch" what might I not do?

Eveleen gone, to me worse than dead; had Fate anything more terrible in store? Could life be supportable and she another's? Could I look on and see him happy in her love? their days gliding on serenely towards the far-off grave; their children growing up around them their pride, their prop,

their comfort; and I, outcast and wretched, with a broken heart and blighted hopes, living still, and praying—oh, how earnestly!—for death or madness.

How long I remained in this state I cannot say. but when I raised my head, I became conscious that the gas had been turned on, that a tall man enveloped in a shabby cloak sat opposite me, and that that man was Philip Marston, my stepfather!

He knew me?

"Mr. Marston!" I exclaimed in amazement, for though I came to look for him, I did not expect to find him without some trouble.

"Yes, George," said he, in a hollow voice; "all that is now left of him—look at me!"

He threw open his cloak as he spoke, and showed a shrunken, wasted, almost aged form, the very shadow of his former self. How different from the appearance he presented three short months before in the gaming-house!

"I am not the Marston you knew," said he with a hoarse laugh, whilst the old fire gleamed in his dark eye; "not the man you once threatened,



with your vengeance—am I? Ha! ha! you see your day is coming.”

“I grieve, deeply grieve, to see you so,” I replied; “and whatever wrong you may have done me or mine, I forgive you, sincerely.”

“Well, that is generous,” said he, with a sneer; “though at present I’d waive the forgiveness, and be contented with a pot of porter.”

“Hardened, irreclaimably hardened!” I muttered, as I rose to give the order.

“You didn’t expect me here to-night, I dare say?” he questioned, as he half emptied the vessel of its contents; “but I dogged you from Cheapside to this, thinking you’d be glad—as, of course, you are—to see your old friend and relative, Phil. Marston. Come, give your hand; I’m no longer proud, and shouldn’t object to your standing a little gin hot; that is, when this is drunk. Ah! times are changed—*et nos me*—confound it, what’s the rest? My Latin, like my clothes, is getting a little rusty, and both sadly need a polishing.”

“You are indeed changed!” I murmured; “sadly changed.”

"Yes, I thought you would say so," he replied "six years have told upon me—didn't pass over like a summer cloud. Left their mark, eh?"

He raised his hat with a grim smile, and I saw the hard, rough lines upon his forehead and about the angles of the mouth, and the retreating hair, now thickly interspersed with grey, and the heavy jaw creased and flabby; all bespeaking to my mind less age than hard living. Though his figure looked shrunken, his face was bloated, coarse, sensual, and almost savage, but the expression of the eye was unchanged, and the voice, though sometimes harsh and unmusical, as deep, sonorous, and commanding as of old.

I looked at him in silence. He was but eight and thirty, yet one would have readily forgiven the falsehood had he professed himself fifty.

"You have suffered?" I asked, after a pause.

"Aye, a little! All of us does that, I suppose. 'Man is born to trouble as the—the—help me out, lad.'"

"As the sparks fly upward," said I, completing the sentence.

"That's a statement I'm prepared to endorse at any moment, George, for I've found its truth."

"It was a wise man said it," I returned.

"Aye, and I wish to the great God that I had long, long years ago listened to all that this same wise man has said."

"It is not yet too late, Mr. Marston."

"Bah, man!" he exclaimed, hastily; "would you have me live over my life again? Phil. Marston, the drunkard, gambler—robber, if you like,—turn penitent and reform, and be held up to the world as a model of divine—no, hang it, bad as I am, I hate profanity, and I was bordering upon it just now. But, as I was saying, nothing short of a miracle ever brings a sheep so long lost as I have been back to the fold. We stray from pasture to pasture almost insensibly, and are soon beyond all hope of recovery. Let that pass, though, and tell me what you have been doing these five years or more."

I told him.

"I knew this in part," he replied, "and, notwithstanding the old grudge, I was glad to know it."

---

"Knew it! How did you know it?"

"Why, from a queer sort of a fellow that I met in a 'little hell' down in —— Street, and who is something or another in Roberts's."

"Did he speak of me?" I asked, rather astonished.

"Oh, not he—mentioned your name accidentally, and I managed to pick out of him about you without once exciting his suspicion. You may depend, George, I did not let a word slip that could lead him to suppose that you and I were other than strangers to each other."

"And this man, what is he like?"

"Tall and gaunt with flaxen hair, green eyes, and a gaping mouth."

I needed not to ask the name. It was Jackson!

"Have you seen him often in this 'hell' that you spoke of?"

"Two or three times, not more."

Mr. Marston pointed significantly to the empty pewter before him, and then, as if anticipating the order that I would give, knocked loudly with his knuckles upon the table, and in an authoritative

tone directed that the glasses should be replenished forthwith.

I was determined not to drink more, but I saw there was no use in opposing him.

The gin was brought in, reeking hot, and looking "as palatable a poison as you would find for miles round." I put my hand into my pocket to pay, but Marston stopped me.

"Fair play is a jewel," George; "it's my turn now."

He pulled out a decayed-looking purse, which I saw contained a half-crown, three shillings, a sixpence, and a few coppers.

"There's eighteen-pence," said he to the man, carelessly throwing down that sum. "Keep the change, and take yourself off as quickly as possible."

The pot-boy vanished!

My stepfather sipped his gin with evident satisfaction, pulled out his pipe, stretched his legs upon the seat, and seemed determinedly bent upon being comfortable. I looked at him through his cloud of smoke, and a more contented face I never saw in all my life. There was a quiet, carnal sense of

enjoyment, a sort of "take-thy-ease,-my-soul" expression stamped upon it, that was almost pleasing to behold. And yet God and his own heart only knew how little cause the poor fellow had for being contented with himself, the world, or anything in it.

His had been an eventful life, full of sorrow, suffering, poverty, shame, and crime; and yet there he sat, pipe and glass, strangely oblivious of the past, and utterly indifferent as to the future. Had the "Sword of Damocles" hung above his head, this man would quietly have drunk his grog and smoked his pipe beneath it.

How much he smoked or how much he drank, I do not know,—but I *do* know that he seemed to do both incessantly for an hour or more. Drink was his bane! cure him of that, and soul and body might yet be saved.

Meanwhile he drained glass after glass without any very palpable results. True, the cheek became a little more flushed, and an additional ray or two of light were thrown into the eye; but beyond these I could see no change. His hand

was steady, his voice firm, and his language clear, intelligent, and even striking. The morality of the latter, however, was sometimes more than questionable.

"You are dull, my lad?" said he, after a long pause in the conversation.

"I was thinking," I replied.

"A bad habit!" he returned, striking the ashes from his pipe, and refilling it, "a very bad habit indeed! Were *I* to think, what, in Heaven's name, would become of me! Why, I should go mad in a week, or become a prey to little fishes innumerable at the bottom of the Thames; or be trying a summersault on my own account from the top of the Monument. No, my boy, that would never do — drink, and bid care and thought defiance. That's my motto."

"An indifferent one, I fear."

"In the long-run, perhaps; but *who* looks to the future?"

"We all should."

"And do you really believe there is a future?" he asked.

"Do *you* believe in *my* existence?"

"Fairly put, and shall be as plainly answered.

I *do* believe in your existence. What, then?"

"Then you as firmly believe in a future state, and, with it, its rewards and punishments."

"I don't think the inference at all a necessary one—nay, you may have read and seen enough of the world to be aware that there are those who have not hesitated to deny both."

"Yes, but on their death-beds they have usually recanted—have they not?" I asked.

"It may be so; but, to be serious with you, I *do* believe in a future, and so does every man and woman within this sea-girt isle of ours, whether they will admit it or no. But with that belief, amounting to a positive certainty, is it not strange, is it not inconsistent that we travel on that 'broad road' at such a fearful pace, the more especially when we so well know that destruction lies at the end of it! This is bold language, you will say, from me. Be it so, I cannot help it."

"He is *not* hardened. Oh, my mother, I groaned aloud, had you been spared us, what



might not this man now be?—an ornament to society, instead of a—”

“*Curse!* speak it boldly,” said Marston, with a slight touch of remorse in his tones. “Society owes me nothing but a halter, and that it is prepared to give me at any moment.”

“Come,” I replied earnestly, do not talk in this way; “your offences are many, no doubt; but sincere repentance can, and, if you desire it shall, atone. In another land and far away—away from the temptations which now beset you—you may redeem the past, and enter once more upon the paths of rectitude and honour.”

“Too late, George—too late!”

“Oh, do not say so, I implore you. Can my mother’s memory do nothing?”

“Nothing!”

“My poor aid?”

“Nothing!”

“And will you suffer yourself to be bound hand and foot by the great enemy of souls? Oh, pause a moment ere you decide, for upon that decision may depend your eternal happiness.”

"Again I say too late!"

"Its never too late! Remember the dying thief, and—"

"The dying thief had faith—I have none. No, no; there is no hope! As I have lived, so shall I die, and how soon my death comes I care not. When I am gone the world will manage to get on without me. But my hour is not yet come; when it is, and if you be above the earth, you shall hear from me."

"And can I do nothing for you now?"

The man suddenly laid his head upon the table, and gave way to an uncontrollable burst of sorrow—sorrow that seemed to crush both heart, and soul, and spirit—and in that moment I thought I saw a little ray of hope.

Yes, this poor fellow wept; sunken, degraded, outcast, and wretched, sinned against and sinning, with the brand of Cain almost stamped upon his brow, he wept—wept such tears, perhaps, as the denying Peter may have wept in the outer court of Pilate's hall!

My hand was upon his arm, the first time for

oh, how many years! and my tears fell hot and fast upon it.

"Can I do nothing?" I repeated.

But he did not hear me.

For full ten minutes he remained entirely absorbed in grief, so violent that it shook every joint and limb like an ague.

Tears are sometimes sacred, and even holy. The Lord of Life and Glory Himself wept at the tomb of Lazarus.

At length he raised his head, and showed a white and suffering face.

"You asked me just now," he said, "could you do anything for me—there is one thing—"

"Name it!" I exclaimed, eagerly.

"Should you survive me, and that I die in England, *bury me beside your mother.*"

It was the first time he had mentioned her, and it seemed to me, that, with all his faults, he loved her memory dearly.

I promised him faithfully, solemnly, earnestly, and, as I saw the eye glisten, and felt the strong grasp of the strong hand, I could not help thinking

that under the hardened flinty exterior, lay a heart not wholly dead to the best instincts of our nature.

But the darker side of the picture was again turned; no sooner had I given him the undertaking sought for, than he again addressed himself to his glass (brandy this time), and drank faster and more furiously than before; and I was forced to conclude that true repentance was far from his thoughts. My mother's name and fate, coupled with his own cruel conduct, melted him for the moment, but that, I fear, was all.

I again approached the Jackson subject.

"Did he gamble much?" I asked.

"Oh, no," was the reply; "he's a close fellow, and merely watches the play."

"Does he appear to be well known at this gambling-house?"

"Well, I can hardly say, as I am but a comparative stranger there myself."

"Will you keep your eye on him?"

"Certainly, if you wish it."

Much more passed between us, and it was half-past ten when I rose to leave.

To my offer of money, he merely said,—“Not now—when I want any I will contrive to let you know; but do not try to find me for some time. I am like the owl, and a meeting in ‘the Shoreditch’ would rather compromise you with your friends. When you really do want me, Hopkins will find me at any moment.”

“Farewell, then!” said I, grasping his hand; “remember what I have promised.”

“I do—I do!” said he, gratefully; “and may God bless you for it!”

“And for Jackson—”

“Yes,” he interrupted.

“If he be fond of play, try and warn him of his danger. Were he once suspected he would be lost.”

“And have you, yourself, never suspected him?”

“Never!”

“Well, do not fear me,” said Marston, laughingly, as he glided from my side, and passed out into the darkness of the night. The next moment I sought the street myself.





